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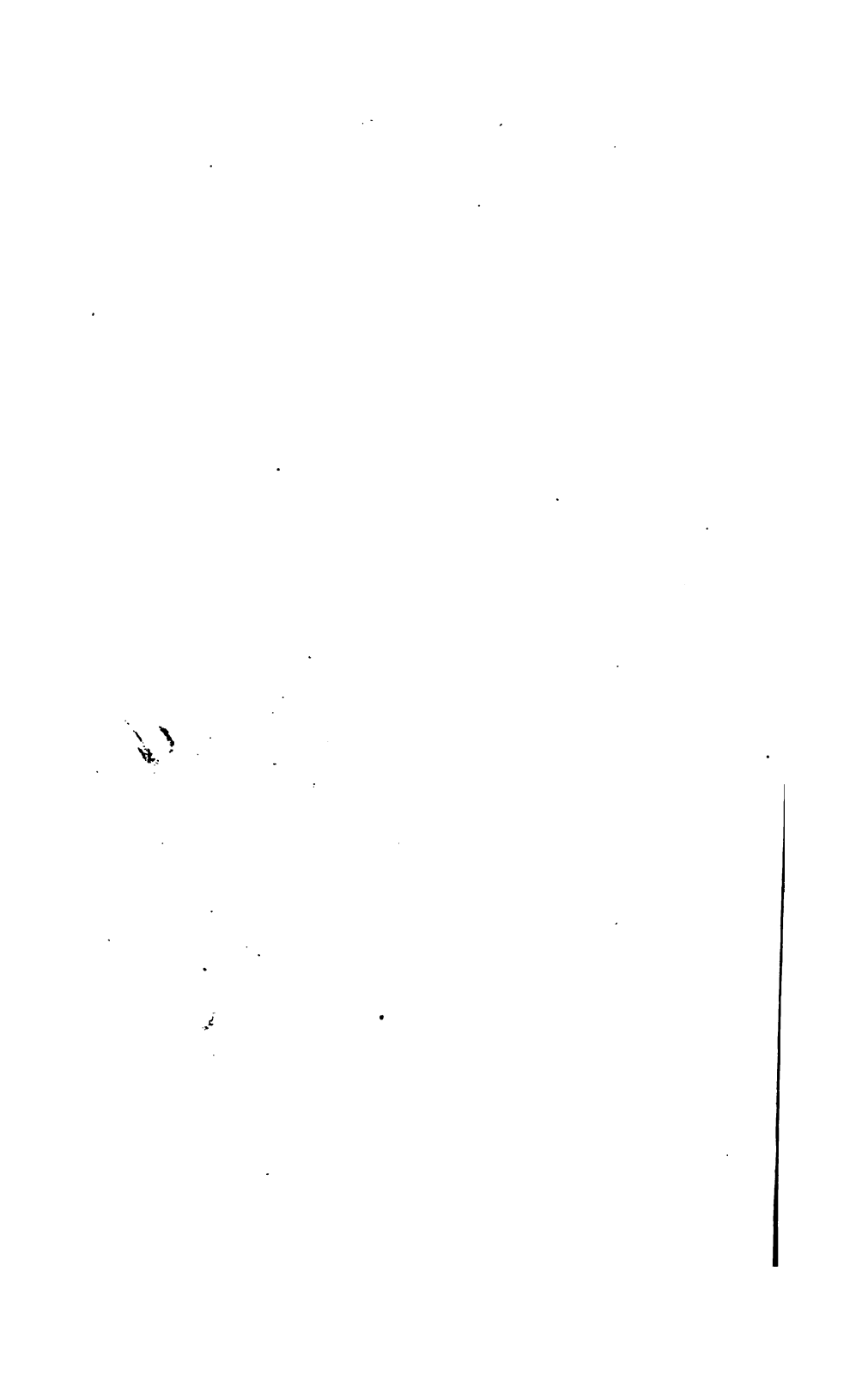












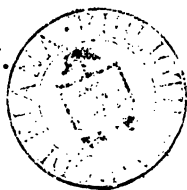
THE
LAY PREACHER.

EDITED BY

JOHN BATE,

AUTHOR OF "CYCLOPEDIA OF ILLUSTRATION OF MORAL AND
RELIGIOUS TRUTHS," "AIDS TO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE," &c., &c.

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PREFACE.

At the close of another year we desire to renew our thanks, first of all, to God for His favour in relation to our work, and secondly, to the numerous subscribers and contributors who have sustained us by their good will and co-operation.

We can hardly believe that it is four years since we began this work, so rapidly has the time passed away. We hear the voice calling upon us with increased emphasis, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," for "the night cometh when no man can work."

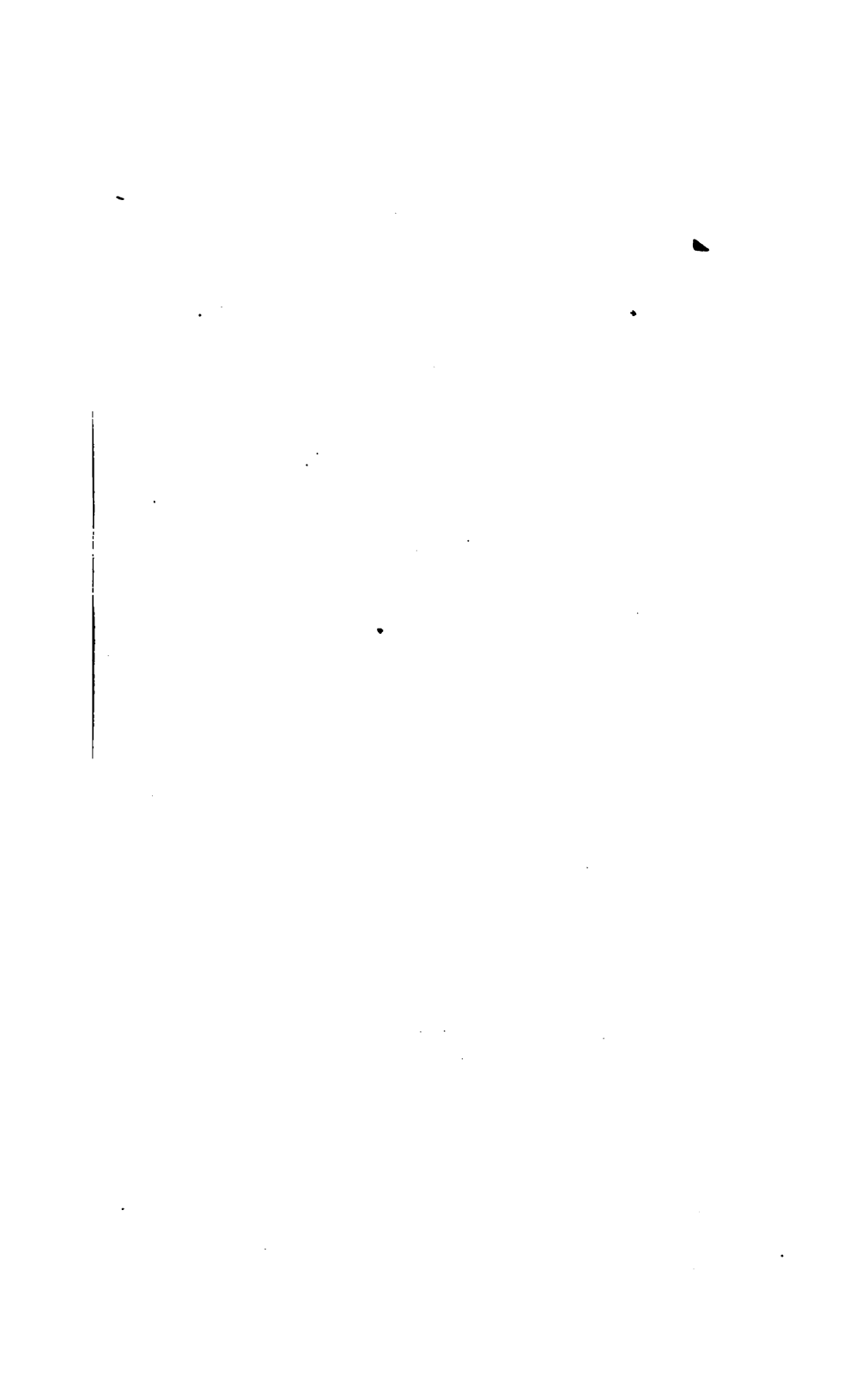
The new volume will commence a *new series*, enlarged, in which we hope to embody additional things of instruction and usefulness. We also hope that our friends and patrons will hereby become more extensive in the churches.

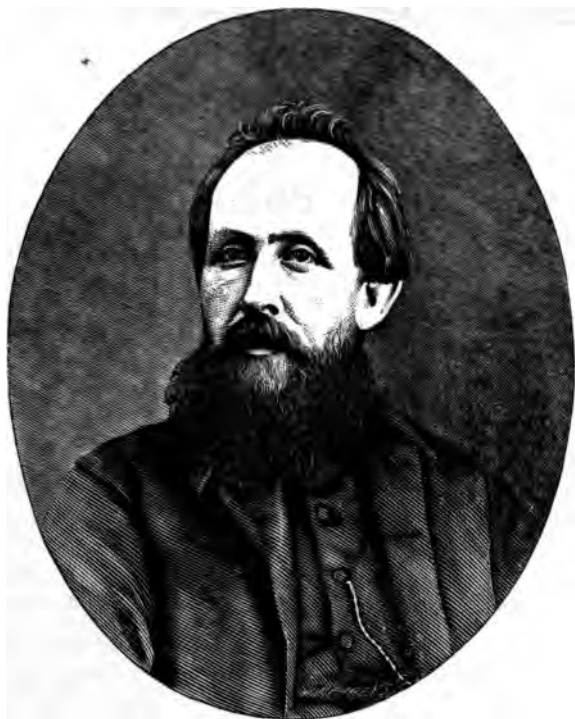
"Brethren, pray for us," that the *Lay Preacher* may be more than ever a power for good among you. We know by many testimonies that it has been a blessing, but desire that in this regard it may abound more and more.

That the Holy Spirit may come in a mighty baptism upon all the Lord's prophets and people, is the earnest prayer of

THE EDITOR.

Aylesbury, November, 1872.





Yours Truly
The Editor.



THE LAY PREACHER.

Lay Preachers and Revivals in 1872.

WILL the churches of Christ in this country be favoured with reviving influences and scenes from God during this new year? Who can answer this question? Is it with mortals to answer? Or must it be left for the evolution of days and months to decide? *Positively*, no human being can reply. He may conjecture that such and such will be the case, from the signs of the times; he may say that, providing the churches pursue a certain course, prescribed by their Great Head, certain results may follow; but as for affirming that we shall or shall not have revivals, is more than anyone may venture to do.

It is not for the churches to speculate or to theorise on the subject, but to proceed at once to use the means for the accomplishment of the work. *Believe that it can be.* In this belief act on the Divine plan with human agency; and “as thou hast believed, so shall it be done unto thee.” “All things are possible to him that believeth.”

To have revivals in the churches, we believe that the churches should see the need of them, and stir themselves

in God to seek them. This should be so to as great an extent as there is any moral or spiritual life to move in this direction. And if this is not done, let the few, or even the one who sees the need of a revival, himself get revived, and then become the burning flame which shall give light to other torches, until all shall be on fire in the heavenly cause.

But what of preachers in bringing about revivals? It is a pure mistake to say or think that this must be done by the stated ministry only; that they have the time, and on them devolves the obligation. They have their place and work in relation to this matter without doubt. But their work is their own, and not others. The local preachers, too, have their work in this department, which cannot be done by any above them (in office) or below them (in office). They cannot shrink from it without danger to their souls, and without incurring grave responsibility before God.

1. *As Preachers of the Gospel you have something to do in the work of revivals.* In the choice of subjects; in the manner of dealing with them; in the spirit which animates you, you may contribute towards revivals. Preach to believers, to quicken and sanctify them. Preach to sinners, to awaken and convert them. Preach to backsliders, to open their eyes, and to bring them again to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. Preach Jesus as the Divine, the only, the present, the loving, the gracious Saviour of all. Preach repentance, faith, conversion, holiness, and all such truths as may arouse and bestir all classes in your congregations. Preach the Holy Spirit as the Divine agent in the Church, without Whom none can pray, repent, believe, work, or live in acceptance before God and power before men. Preach in that energy of faith, zeal, and affection, as shall convince your hearers that you are set upon and

expecting a revival. Go into the pulpit all ablaze with Holy Ghost fire, and you shall scatter it abroad among the people, who also shall be set on fire in the same holy cause.

Study for this; read for this; pray for this; and it shall be done. Do not wait, brother, till some one else set you the example. Thy model is Jesus, the preacher; Paul, the preacher; Peter, the preacher. Thy impelling, inciting, and sustaining power is the Holy Spirit. If others are dead or formal, why shouldst thou be so? If others are not revival preachers, is that a reason why thou shouldst not be one?

O that the Spirit of God in His reviving energies may fall upon the Lay Preachers of England, and make them to preach this year as those whose hearts are set upon having a general revival of pure and undefiled religion throughout the churches to which they belong!

2. *As those who attend prayer-meetings and occasionally conduct them, keep your minds upon a revival.* In a way and spirit becoming your relation to the people, request short, earnest, pointed, believing prayers. Have the singing lively, frequent, harmonious. Give a few words of appropriate exhortation. Foster any manifestation of true reviving signs. Quench not the influences of the Holy Ghost. Encourage sinners and penitents to look there and then for salvation. Adopt the "penitent form," or the "inquiry room," if necessary. Let all things be done decently and in order, as shall best comport with the agency and operations of the "free Spirit" of God.

3. As those who may sometimes be under shepherds over the flock, or give addresses to Sunday Schools, keep your minds upon a revival, and let all you say converge to this point. So that in your classes and in the Sunday Schools the reviving power may be sought

with earnest prayers, mighty faith, and unyielding importunity.

4. In a word, brethren, in all your relations and services to the church to which you belong, keep your minds on the coming down of reviving influences, which shall awaken and animate the whole body of believers in Christ Jesus.

5. Do not be deterred from taking your part in seeking a revival by any fear *that your minister or ministers will not approve of it*. If you do it *as a servant of Christ*, in His name, in His Spirit, for His glory, there is no true minister of Jesus that will oppose you. He will encourage you, and bid you "God speed." He will rejoice in your success, and give all the help in counsel, prayer, and co-operation that lies in his power. Neither be deterred from the fear that it is not your work. It is your work, as of everyone in the Church of Christ, according to his gifts, graces, and opportunities, to do all you can to promote the growth of good in the world.

We call upon you, brethren, to lay aside all scruples and fears, to resist all temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to give yourselves to this work. The churches to which you belong have need of revivals. They have need of your exertions in this direction. They have every claim upon your exertions as preachers, as office-bearers, and as members. The Great Master has claims upon you. He calls you to it. Awake to proper apprehension of this work. Go to prayer and meditation upon it, until you feel its obligation; and then go to prayer and meditation again, until you feel the fire from heaven burning in your souls, and constraining you to give yourselves unto this work.

The past year ought to suffice for supineness, worldliness, and *decrease* in the churches. We must not have

it repeated in this year. It gives occasion to the enemies to blaspheme. It is a shame to us. It is a humiliation. The world is more alive, more enterprising, more progressive, more united than the churches! Shall this be always so? God forbid. Ye tens of thousands of Lay Preachers in England, what is your response? In this year of 1872, one and all come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty; and may unprecedented victories be achieved under the command of our Sovereign and Divine Captain!

Incidents, Scenes, and Characters in the Acts of the Apostles.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER I.

“THE Acts of the Apostles” was written by the same hand as the “Gospel according to St. Luke”—that is, by St. Luke himself. The two books are intimately connected, as much so as two contiguous links in a chain, or as the first and second steps in a flight of stairs, or as the light of dawn and the light of noonday. The “Acts” is the book of which the Gospel is the introduction. The one is the *beginning* of which the other is the continuance and the end. “The former treatise” speaks of all that “Jesus *began* both to do and teach” while in human form He sojourned on earth. This treatise by the same author is an account of what Jesus did and taught through His apostles after that He ascended on high, and took His seat on the throne of the universe. To every student of the two books it will appear that the one object of the author is to reveal Christ in His Messianic and Divine operations. In the Acts, it is not so much Peter, Paul, Stephen, John, &c., that Luke seeks to exhibit, as it is the presence and work of Christ in their preaching, miracles, sufferings, and labours. The Christ enthroned as Messiah in the heavens, unseen to be sure, but present and working in His Church, carrying on what He had on earth in person “*began both to do and teach,*” is the scope of this book of Luke the Evangelist.

This feature of the Acts will appear obvious in our meditations from time to time upon its Incidents, Scenes, and Characters.

THE PROMISE—THE WAITING—THE FULFILMENT.

The chief promise of God to the Old Testament Church was the Messiah. The chief promise of Messiah to the New Testament Church was the Holy Ghost. Again and again does He speak of Him in the ears of His disciples. He was to be another Comforter unto them after His departure. He was to be the Spirit of truth, who should guide them into all truth. He was to be the Remembrancer, to bring all things to their memory whatsoever He had said unto them. He was not to be seen by the world, nor known by it; but they were to see Him and know Him, for He should be in them and dwell with them.

It is questionable whether the apostles understood the full import of these promises of the Spirit, any more than the ancient Church the predictions of the Messiah. This was only to be attained after that the Spirit Himself should descend and explain it unto them.

They did, however, so appreciate the promise, that they believed it, and expected its fulfilment. With the holy life of Messiah before them, with the evidences of His resurrection so numerous and strong within their minds, how could they do otherwise than believe the promise which He had given them concerning the coming of the Spirit?

The precise time and manner of His coming were not included in the promise any more than these were in the predictions of Messiah. He declared He should come after He had left them, and after He had entered heaven as the High-Priest with His own blood, and prayed the Father to give Him unto them; but the time in its exact length was undefined. "Not many days hence," He said just before He departed, "and ye shall receive the promised Comforter." This was the utmost they knew upon this point. They were to tarry in Jerusalem until the Comforter came. This they did.

Having seen their risen Lord ascend from Mount Olivet amid hovering angels up to heaven, where He was to be enthroned Head of the Church and Ruler of all things, they returned to Jerusalem. Doubtless they were full of reflection upon the things they had seen and heard, and full of meditation upon what was to take place not many days hence. And coming into Jerusalem, they entered an upper room (probably lent by some friend for the purpose of their meetings), where they met with others who were gathered for prayer and kindred devout exercises.

In one of their meetings, which were frequent, Peter, aware of the loss of one of their number by death, proposed that the vacancy should be filled. But who should the one be to supply the want? Two names were proposed out of the assembly, Barsabas and Matthias. They would not, however, decide the election on their own wisdom. Recognising "the Lord" as even yet present with them, and superintending their affairs, they invoked His guidance. They had been chosen by Him, so had Judas, the renegade one; and they desired that He should also decide who should take his place. The lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

The apostleship now being complete in its number, they enter with one heart into the spirit of waiting, as enjoined by their Master. In holy patience, in fervent prayer, in lively expectancy, in undeviating regularity, and in unwavering faith—they wait in that upper room for the coming of the other Comforter. Day after day follows each other, but no Comforter descends. They do not forget their Lord. Sorrow fills their hearts that He is gone; but the Consoler promised does not come. Still they wait—praying, looking, hoping, believing. They do not grow impatient—one blaming the other as the cause of the delay of His coming. John does not say to Peter, "Your denial of the Master has kept Him from the fulfilment of the promise;" nor does Peter say to James, "It was your angry temper about the Samaritans which has caused this long delay." No. They were of one heart and of one accord, waiting for the "Promise of the Father." One, two, three, four, five days pass, and no Comforter is come. "What do you think, Thomas?" asks Peter; "will He come now? Is it any use our waiting any longer?" "I begin to doubt," says Didymus, "whether He will. It is now five days since He left us, and the Spirit is not come." "Let us not be weary in waiting," says James, "He did not specify the time. He said, 'Not many days hence.' We have not yet been many days. Let us still patiently wait. May be in a few more days He will come." So the sixth, the seventh, the eighth, the ninth days pass. And lo! on the tenth day, when they were growing weary and faint, almost giving up the last hope of the Comforter, their risen and exalted Lord pours down upon them the promised Paraclete. He comes, not as Messiah came, with a star in the heavens to denote to inquiring wise men the spot of His birth, and with a choir of angels to celebrate His advent. He comes, not in the still small voice amid the calmness and quietude of Horeb's hills. He comes in a mighty rushing wind, in cloven tongues of fire, falling upon them all; giving them unmistakable signs and evidences of His descent. They see Him, they hear Him, they

feel Him. It *is* the Comforter; it *is* the Sanctifier; it *is* the Truth-revealer; it *is* the Remembrancer. He gives them illumination; He gives them new life, new faith, new energy, new power. They see the character and work of their Lord as they never saw them. They feel His love glowing, burning, hallowing their hearts as they never had felt it.

It is the Pentecost, and thousands upon thousands of Jews from Jerusalem and all parts of the world are gathered at the feast. The news of what had occurred in that upper room spreads like all marvellous tidings, and reaches the ears of the multitudes in the city. They rush to the spot of interest, and see with their own eyes, and hear with their own ears, the wonderful things which are taking place among the apostles through the descent of the Spirit.

Here we must end. The waiting is over, the promise is fulfilled, and the apostles are endowed with the Power. The advent of the Holy Ghost is a fact, as much so as the advent of Messiah upwards of thirty-three years before. The New Dispensation is ushered in. The Kingdom of Grace is inaugurated. The exalted King Jesus has poured out the gift which He has received of the Father not only for His loyal subjects, but even for the "rebellious." Now begins the reign of the Son by His Spirit in truth, righteousness, and love among the children of men. Henceforth His name shall be above every name, and His religion the religion to bless the world with peace, purity, and joy.

The Pentecost will be considered in our next paper. Meantime, a few remarks for reflection shall close our present chapter.

1. We see *how far a church may go in good things without receiving the Spirit*. (1.) Knowledge of Jesus to a great extent. (2.) Hold fellowship. (3.) Meet for prayer. (4.) Be united. (5.) Be complete in organisation. (6.) Dwell in peace.

2. That a church of this kind is—(1.) Localised. (2.) Timid. (3.) Not concerned for the conversion of sinners. (4.) Narrow in its views. (5.) Not missionary in its labours. These things may be seen in the church of the upper room, ere the Spirit of Jesus descended upon it.

3. The great gift promised to the Church.

4. Our duty to believe the promise.

5. The spirit in which we should wait for the fulfilment of the promise. (1.) Patience. (2.) Prayerfulness. (3.) Unity. (4.) Love. (5.) Faith. (6.) Expectation.

6. The blessed results which follow the fulfilment of the promise to the Church. (1.) Quickening. (2.) Light. (3.) Life. (4.) Fire. (5.) Power. (6.) Deeper consciousness of an exalted Saviour and King.

7. The fidelity of our Lord : He will do as He has said.

8. The care He has of His own : He will not leave them as orphans, He will come unto them.

9. The connection of Christ with His Church : He is its Giver of all good things—its Head and Fountain whence all its blessings flow.

10. The fall of Judas shows the effect of covetousness. His fall was his own act ; the place he went to was his own—of his own choice.

11. Judas fell ; Peter was restored.

12. Matthias was chosen, not for his own merit, but by the grace of God.

13. The Lord, in answer to prayer, chose him.

14. Officers of churches should be chosen in a prayerful spirit.

15. The effect of united prayer in the Church below upon its glorious Lord. " Whatsoever two or three of you shall AGREE to ask as touching My kingdom, it shall be done."



Expositions of some of the shorter Psalms.

BY REV. THORNLEY SMITH.

IT is intended to offer to our readers some brief expositions of the shorter and most popular Psalms, in which we shall inquire into their authorship, mark their structure, and unfold their lessons as applicable to ourselves. Ever fresh and ever new, the Psalms can never be exhausted. They are like a many-stringed instrument out of which the sweetest and most varied music may be brought, if only the hand is skilful enough to touch the chords aright. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit may aid us in this task, and that we may, under His direction, bring out of these wondrous compositions a few notes, at least, which shall both strike the ear and affect the heart, and thus lead Lay Preachers especially to read the Psalms with greater profit both to themselves and others. We shall not give the text of the Psalm, as our space is very limited, and the reader can easily turn to it in his Bible and read it there. For a valuable exposition of the Psalms, including a new translation, the reader is directed to the work of the Rev. J. J. S. Perowne, 2 vols.

PSALM I.

The first Psalm appears to have been placed in the position it occupies *as an introduction to the entire book of the Psalms*. And it is eminently worthy of this position, for it treats of the blessedness of the righteous, and the misery of the wicked, subjects which frequently occur in the Psalms, and which demand the attention of every reader. The authorship of this Psalm is unknown, but some suppose that it was written by Solomon, as the word rendered "scornful" in verse 1 is found nowhere else in the Psalms, but is often used in the early chapters of the Book of Proverbs.

The construction of this Psalm is very beautiful. It consists of three strophes of two verses each. It may, however, be divided into two portions, as follows:—

I. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

1. *His character.* This is very strikingly described in two aspects, a negative and a positive one.

(a) *Its negative aspect.* (1.) He walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. The ungodly here are the wicked, the passionate, the restless, whose counsel is ever of the most mischievous and foolish character. They were numerous in the psalmist's days; they are numerous in our own. They proffer their counsels in the public highways, through the medium of the press, and in theatres and other places of resort to which the thoughtless are attracted. But the good man heeds them not. He will neither take their advice nor act on their principles. From everything they have to say he resolutely turns his ear. Prov. iv. 14, 15. (2.) "He standeth not in the way of sinners." Sinners are the active agents of the wicked one, those who not only give wicked counsel, but pursue wicked courses of conduct. To stand in their way is a deeper grade of evil, for it is to go voluntarily into their midst, to seek their company, to court their society, and thus to become one with them in mind and heart. The good man cannot—dare not do this, but shuns the very path in which they walk, knowing that if he places himself in the way of temptation he can only expect to fall. Gen. xxxix. 9. (3.) He sitteth not in the seat of the scornful. To sit in his seat is a still deeper grade of wickedness, for a scorner is one who scoffs at things sacred, and blasphemes the name of God. He not only gives wicked counsel secretly, but he makes an open declaration of his hostility to religion, and glories in his scepticism and his shame. And many, especially among the young men of our day, stand and listen to him, then take their seat by his side, and ultimately become scoffers like himself. Can the good man do this? No; he says with the prophet Jeremiah, "I sat not in the assembly of the

mockers, nor rejoiced." Jer. xv. 17. And to him nothing can be more distressing than to hear the language which, in the workshop, in the mill, or on ship-board, he is sometimes compelled to hear.

(b) *Its positive aspect.* (1.) "His delight is in the law of the Lord." The law of the Lord signifies the Decalogue, and everything that flows out of it, or the Divine precepts given to man for the guidance of his conduct and his life. To Christians it is the deeper law laid down in the sermon on the mount, than which nothing more sublime was ever uttered, nothing more complete can ever be conceived. In this law the good man delights. He does not find fault with it as being too strict and too severe, but acknowledges that it is holy, just, and good; and, his heart renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost, he strives to fulfil it in every possible respect. (2.) "He meditates in it day and night." Deut. vi. 6, 7; Josh. i. 8. The word here used signifies he *is wont* to meditate on it; and to meditate on anything, is to speak to oneself about it, to utter inward thoughts respecting it, and thus to become thoroughly acquainted with it, in order to practise it aright. How much there is in the law of God, in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, worthy of meditation! And how often is the good man found in this pleasant and profitable exercise! Psalm cxix. 97; 1 Tim. iv. 15. It is only by meditation that we can make God's Word our own; and in that Word we may ever find things to think upon, both in the midst of the day's busy occupations and in the retirement and stillness of the night. And the man who *thinks* or meditates in the law of God is the man who practises it. His meditations lead him to admire and love that law, so that he takes it as the rule of all his conduct, and as the guide of all his steps.

2. *His blessedness.* This flows out of his character as naturally as the stream from the perennial spring. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Thoughts, that is to say, form the character, and character is the main source of the happiness of life. "So," or "therefore he shall be like a tree," &c. The good man is often compared to a tree—the palm-tree, the cedar, the oak—Psalm xcii. 12; Isa. lxi. 3—and the figure is a very striking one. But he is like a tree planted by streams of water, for in the east, where rain falls but seldom, this is essential to the growth of a tree, and its roots striking into the soil and finding moisture all around, send up the sap into the very highest branches, so that the fruit ripens in its season, and the leaf is always green. There is no doubt that Jeremiah had this passage in view when in similar language he describes the blessedness of the man that trusts in the Lord. Jer. xvii. 7, 8

And he, too, says his "leaf shall be green;" for the good man is not like a withered tree, or even like a tree that casts its leaves in winter; but like an evergreen which is fresh and beautiful the whole year round. Like the stately palm of eastern lands, one of the most beautiful productions of nature, he brings forth fruit in old age, until at length he is transplanted to a richer soil in the glorious paradise of God. But what is the river by the banks of which he is at now? It is that river of life which makes glad the city of God; that river which Ezekiel saw rising beneath the throne of God and flowing through a parched and dreary land, but carrying with it fertility and life in all its progress. Ezek. xlvii. 9; Rev. xxii. 2. It is added, "And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper," for the true secret of success in any undertaking is the blessing of God, without which our best schemes will be fruitless, and our wisest plans will fail.

II. THE MISERY OF THE WICKED. Their character is implied in what was said before, and now it is said, "Not so with them," that is, they are not like such a tree, but, &c. Observe—

1. *What they are like.* "The chaff which the wind driveth away." Isa. xvii. 13. In the east threshing-floors were placed on lofty heights (2 Sam. xxiv. 18), so that when the corn was threshed it was thrown up into the air, which blew the chaff away. Matt. iii. 12. Now the wicked are like chaff, light and unsubstantial, of no value either to themselves or others; for chaff is nothing but chaff, and is utterly worthless in the esteem of everyone.

2. *What is their doom?* "They shall not stand," &c. The judgment is God's; that righteous judgment which He is ever exercising, and which will culminate in the last day. How can the chaff stand in His judgment either now or then? He knows it to be chaff, whatever men may think of it, and as chaff it will appear in the final ordeal. But what is meant by "the congregation of the righteous?" They are the true Israel of God, or those who are like the man previously described; and with them the wicked have no fellowship. They often, it is true, come now into the assemblies of God's people; but they do not really belong to them; and one day, when the chaff is separated from the wheat, they will be driven out, and become as fuel for the eternal fire. Num. xvi. 33.

3. *On what all this depends.* It depends on the certain knowledge of the Lord Jehovah, who is acquainted with the way both of the wicked and of the righteous, who can make no mistake, and will act impartially and justly towards all. The way of the righteous He approves; the way of the wicked He abhors; and whilst the one will obtain His richest favour, the other He will cast away for ever. Jer. xvii. 6.

These promises, these warnings, these lessons are for all, and the entire Psalm is of universal application. The age we live in is in many respects a scornful and a frivolous age, and Christian men are called not only to shun its evils, but to bear their faithful testimony against them. Be it ours to take our stand on the side of truth, and righteousness, and God, for then we may safely leave the issue in His hands.

Materials for Sermons.

I.—A REAL CHRISTIAN.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."—2 Cor. v. 17.

THESE words contain the following things:—

I. A description of a real Christian. "If any man be in Christ."

II. An account of the change which the real Christian has experienced. "He is a new creature."

III. The effects of this change. "Old things are," &c.

I. A DESCRIPTION OF A REAL CHRISTIAN. However strange this expression may seem to some, it is the uniform language of the New Testament, and commonly signifies a true disciple of our Lord and Saviour.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Rom. viii. 1. "I knew a man in Christ." 2 Cor. xii. 2. "He was also in Christ before me." Rom. xvi. 7. "Of whom are ye in Christ Jesus." 1 Cor. i. 30. And in this chapter:—"That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Many of the epistles are addressed "To the saints in Christ Jesus," which accords with the language of the prophet Isaiah, "shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Isa. xlv. 17, 24, 52. The Apostle John employs similar expressions, "And now, little children, abide in Him." 1 John ii. 2. "We are in Him that is true." 1 John v. 20. But the words of our Lord Himself are most decisive. "He that

eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him." John vi. 56. Union with Christ is necessary in order to communion with Him. He saves only those who thus stand related to Him.

1. *The believer is in Christ as the stone is in the building.* God is preparing a spiritual temple, Christ is the precious foundation and corner-stone of this temple, and believers are built up "a spiritual house," &c. We may learn more fully the nature of this union by the parable of the vine and its branches: believers are united to Christ, and abiding in Him, receive the influences of His Holy Spirit. They are in Christ as the members are in the human body. He is the Head of the Church, and every believer is a part of His mystical body. They all live spiritually by virtue of this union with their Head: they are placed under His guidance and authority, and have one common interest.

2. *The believer is in Christ as Noah was in the ark.* He believed the testimony of God, both respecting the deluge and the appointed method of preservation; and when the deluge came he was preserved in the ark, while all the rest of the human species were swept away with one common desolation. Thus the sinner, hearing of the wrath of God revealed from heaven "against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," believing the Divine record, "is moved with fear." He hears also of Christ, the true ark, which God Himself has provided; and, renouncing all other confidences, by faith he betakes himself to this sure Refuge, and is sheltered from the overwhelming deluge of Divine vengeance.

3. Under the law, the man-slayer was exposed to the sword of the avenger of blood; but cities of refuge were provided, to which he might flee for security. In like manner the sinner, perceiving himself exposed to the wrath of God, and the curse of His violated law, must "flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him in the Gospel."

4. He that is thus united unto Jesus is delivered from condemnation. "Being justified by faith, he has peace with God." "He is admitted into a covenant of friendship with the everlasting God," and adopted into His family as a son and heir.

II. THE CHANGE WHICH THE REAL CHRISTIAN HAS EXPERIENCED. "He is a new creature." Surely something more

is here meant than a decent moral conduct, or an external reformation.

1. It is proper to observe that he who is a new creature *continues in some respects the same as before*. His body, with all its members and senses, is the same as before, though he is disposed to make a new use of them. His soul and all his faculties are the same, though differently occupied. He possesses his former measure of capacity, with the peculiarity of his genius, and the original complexion of his mind.

2. What, then, is especially intended? Here the Scripture assists our inquiry by apt illustrations. "Ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you," or as it may be rendered, "into which ye were delivered," alluding to the mould into which melted metal is poured, that it may take its intended fashion and impression. Thus sinners are in themselves "vessels of wrath," bearing the image of fallen Adam; but the new creation forms us into vessels of mercy, stamped with the image of Christ, and fitted for the Master's use.

3. The Scriptural emblems of sinners, according to their different propensities, are taken from lions, tigers, foxes, swine, and serpents, and other fierce, crafty, or filthy animals; but a sheep or the dove is the emblem of a Christian, and the new creature effects this marvellous change.

4. The metaphors in which this new creation is spoken of in Scripture confirms the explanation that has been given, "A new heart will I give you." John iii. 8. If only an outward reformation had been here intended, a plain subject had been perplexed by needless obscurity of expression.

III. THE EFFECTS OF THIS CHANGE: "Old things," &c.

1. *His old sentiments are vanished away*. His high opinion of himself, of his heart and actions, are no more. He now ceases to *shine in his own eyes*. His hard thoughts of the *Divine* law as unreasonably strict are passed away. He perceives the commandment to be holy, just, and good, and the transgression of it to be replete with ingratitude, rebellion, and contempt of God. His former thoughts of Christ and His salvation are passed away. He once despised the glorious Redeemer, perhaps he deemed those to be hypocrites or enthusiasts who spoke in animated language of His love and preciousness; but he is now

ready to exclaim, "How great is His goodness! how great is His beauty!"

2. *His old pursuits and pleasures are done away.* He ceases to relish those scenes of dissipation or sensual indulgence which once were his element. His conduct is decided in things directly evil. He hates and dreads sin as his worst enemy. He does not forsake his lawful employments, but he learns to follow them from new motives and in a new manner.

3. *The operations of his mind are new.* He fears the frown of God; he hopes for glory and immortality; he mourns for his past sins and the miseries of other men; he rejoices in God, and abhors that which is evil. His memory is replenished with divine truths, and his imagination is employed in realising invisible things.

4. *His former discourse is passed away, and his old course of behaviour is also renounced.* His idle, slanderous, profane, or polluted words, are exchanged for such as are pure, peaceable, and edifying.

5. It will be readily perceived that *the old companions of such an one will pass away.* Even when relative duties and other causes render some intercourse with ungodly persons unavoidable, it will become less cordial and intimate when such opposite characters meet; one of them must be out of his element. All those associates, therefore, of the new converts of former years, who have no interest in continuing the acquaintance, will drop off as leaves from the trees in autumn. J. SMITH.

II.—PREACHERS' REQUEST TO THE CHURCHES.

"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified."—2 THESS. iii. 1, 2.

PAUL was at Corinth, preaching the Gospel, when he wrote this epistle. He met with persecutions from the Jews. He felt the importance of his work, and as missionaries now in foreign lands, he wrote to churches already established to solicit an interest in their prayers. [In marginal references, notice how the request of the text agrees with similar requests made to other churches.]

The text contains thought for meditation, as not only applicable to Paul, and Silas, and Timothy, who were with him, but to all preachers of the Gospel in the present day.

These words contain a request made by preachers to the churches.

I. TO WHOM THE REQUEST OF THE TEXT IS MADE, AND WHO ARE TO ATTEND TO IT—the “*brethren*.” That is, the members of the church, those who have believed the word of the Lord, received it, and endeavour to live according to its teachings, and who, by these things, are brought together in one common brotherhood, of which God is the Divine Father. The Scriptures call upon all to pray, but especially the “*brethren*.” Ministers exhort all to pray, but more particularly the “*brethren*.” To whom can preachers of the Gospel look for intercessory prayers on the behalf of the word if not to them? Infidels, worldlings, unconverted men, generally have no sympathy with the word of the Lord in its conflicts and triumphs. If the “*brethren*” do not pray for them, preachers will be without prayer, excepting as they may pray themselves. They will stand solitary in the conflict, without a single intercessor on earth to invoke Divine aid and power to give success to their labours.

II. THE REQUEST MADE—“Pray for us,” &c.

Paul, though the “chiefest” of the apostles, felt the need of the prayers of the churches. All his natural, family, and ecclesiastical qualifications for preaching were insufficient without the Spirit and presence of God. These could only be secured in prayer.

This is true of all preachers. The blessings which alone can be obtained in answer to prayer are the *essential* blessings to make a preacher of the Gospel successful in his labours.

The “*brethren*,” while required to pray for themselves and their families and all men, are called upon to pray especially for them who preach the Gospel. They are only human—are engaged in an arduous, laborious, and responsible work—have great enemies and difficulties to contend with.

Hence the need that the “*brethren*” should pray for them, that they may be—1. Men filled with the Spirit. 2. Men of holiness. 3. Men of fidelity. 4. Men honest and truthful. 5. Men earnest and kind. 6. Men courageous and fearless. The age needs such men as preachers of the word.

Not only are the “*brethren*” to pray for preachers themselves, but also that *the word of the Lord may have free course*. By “the word of the Lord” is meant *the Gospel of Christ*—spoken

by Him—He is its subject—it leads to Him. “Free course.” This implies that the preaching of the Gospel had obstacles in the way of its success. See Acts xviii. for an account of the obstacles at Corinth. There always have been and are still obstacles to the success of the Gospel. 1. Sometimes from national governments. 2. Sometimes from false religions. 3. Local influences, individuals, societies, &c. 4. Family. 5. Literary. 6. Scientific. 7. Philosophical. 8. Personal—this the chief. Others would have little influence but for this. Hence unbelief, doubt, fear, pride, self-righteousness, habits, associations, indecision—all meet in the person as obstacles preventing the word of the Lord having free course in his heart and life. [Apply this thought to such in the congregation as have not yet been converted.]

The “brethren” are to pray that these obstacles may be removed, so that the word may have *free course*: a course clear and unobstructed; that there may always be the *white light signal* of safety, and an open way, so that the word may “run,” as the margin renders it; may go on from conquering to conquer: may go on from person to person, from family to family, from nation to nation, until the whole world is flooded with its light and blest with its mercy.

And be glorified. The word of the Lord is glorified when it is freely and believingly received by the ungodly, and is effectual in their conversion from darkness to light; when it sanctifies God’s people and dwells in them richly with all wisdom; when it is salt to their conversation, light to their lives, a sword in their hands, a lamp to their feet; when it is the power that confutes error, confounds sin, &c., &c.

The *unselfishness* of the apostle in this request is manifest. He says, “Pray for us, *that* the word of the Lord,” &c. He does not ask for their prayers that the answer may *rest in him*; that he might be more popular, more happy, more intelligent, or in any way benefited *personally* and *solely*; but whatever he receives in answer to their prayers, he desires it to go forth from him in the furtherance of the Gospel.

So it is with all true preachers of the word. They ask the prayers of the Church, that through them the word and grace of God may be glorified.

— This is a great incentive to Christians to pray for preachers:

They are stars in the Saviour's right hand, and as the Church prays, He makes them shine, and the dark world gets the illumination. They are earthen vessels in the use of the Master, and as the Church prays, He fills them with heavenly good, and they pour it out upon the needy around. They are ambassadors in the Sovereign's service, and as the Church prays for them, He gives them wisdom to be successful in effecting peace with His foes. [This thought may be enlarged, if necessary, by other figures.] Thus it appears how the "brethren," in praying for the preachers of the word, will themselves be benefited, and have their prayers answered for themselves and others in the word having free course and being glorified. B.

Illustrations, &c.

PARALLEL TEXTS.—*Pray for more preachers.*—"The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest." Luke x. 2. *Preachers and people to join in prayer.* "Now, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." Rom. xv. 30. *The people to help preachers by their prayers.* "Ye, also, helping together by prayer for us." 2 Cor. i. 11. *Pray that preachers may be free and faithful.* "Praying for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel. . . . That therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." Eph. vi. 19, 20. "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ." Col. iv. 3. "Brethren, pray for us." 1 Thess. v. 25.

RENDERING.—"Finally (*Furthermore, I entreat you*), brethren, (*to*) pray for us (*apostles and ministers of the Gospel*), that the word of the Lord (*preached by us*) may have free course (*may run to*) and be glorified (*among other Gentiles*)."—Whitby.

NOTES.—*May have free course*, literally, "may run," spread rapidly, without a drag on the wheels of its course. That the new-creating word may "run" as swiftly as the creating word at the first. Ps. cxvii. 15. The opposite is the word of God being bound. 2 Tim. ii. 9. *Glorified*, by sinners accepting it. Acts xiii. 48; Gal. i. 23, 24. Contrast, evil spoken of. 1 Pet. iv. 14. *Pray for us*, as He had done for them. Chap. ii. 16, 17. *May have free course*—may run its race, as the sun doth. Ps.

xix. Eusebius saith that the Gospel spread at first through the world like a sunbeam. *And be glorified.* As it was. Acts xiii. 48. The word never worketh till it be received with admiration.—*Trapp.* *Us*—that is, Paul, Silas, and Timothy, then engaged in arduous labour at Corinth. *Free course.* The idea is, that it might meet with no obstruction, but that it might be carried abroad with the rapidity of a racer, out of whose way every hindrance was removed. The Gospel *would* spread rapidly in the earth if all obstructions which are put in its way were removed; and that they may be removed should be one of the constant subjects of prayer.—*Barnes.*

THE PREACHER'S PRAYER-BOOK.—A preacher of the Gospel removed from one congregation to another. He found it hard to preach, and no effect following his preaching. At last he told his congregation that he was afraid he should never do any good among them, as he had left his prayer-book behind him whence he came. The people were anxious to know what he meant. He said that he meant the church he had left always prayed for him, and he was happy and successful in his work; but he was fearful that they did not pray for him as their preacher, and, therefore, he was not free and happy in his work.

III.—THE CHIEF REJOICING.

“Rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”—LUKE x. 20.

I. STRANGERS and foreigners, who became naturalised in any particular city of ancient times, had their names written in the register of that city, recording the fact. By this change in their relation to the city, and the record of the fact, they were constituted citizens, and had a right to its privileges.

Thus, when the sinner is converted, and by conversion brought into the kingdom of God's grace, his name is said to be written in heaven, to record the fact of the change; and this change, with the record of it, entitles him to all the privileges and blessings of the kingdom.

Written in heaven. He is a citizen of heaven, as well as a disciple of Jesus or a subject of grace—citizen of heaven in pursuit, in hope, in prospect, in record.

Written in heaven. It may or may not be written on earth, as a converted one. This is of minor consequence. The chief

is to have it written in heaven. The other should not be slighted, but desired and enjoyed, if possible.

Written in heaven. God has written it there. Written it in His book, before Him, preserved by Him, &c.

Written in heaven. While he lives as a subject of grace, it cannot be erased. No malice from hell, no envy from earth, can blot it out. These may blot it out on earth, but not in heaven.

II. If we are citizens of the kingdom of grace, or born again, and our names are written in heaven, we shall know it.

Christ will not keep us in the dark as to this fact. He will let us know for our happiness' sake, for His honour's sake, &c.

Christ Himself will tell us, as He told His disciples. He is prepared to tell, because He is acquainted with the fact. He will communicate this knowledge to us *directly* by His own Holy Spirit, indirectly by His own word; also by our own experience in His power and love.

III. To have our names written in heaven, and to know it, is a cause of **CHIEF REJOICING**. "Rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." The disciples had gone forth and done great things for their Lord—sicknesses, diseases, and even devils had been subject to them; but Jesus said to them, "Do not boast so much of these things; rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." This is of more concern and use to you, in your interests as redeemed and immortal men. These you may do as mere instruments, and fail of salvation; but you cannot have your names in heaven, and be lost.

We may have great riches, great education, great political power, great human honours and influence. Our names may be great in popularity and in earthly registers. We may be able to do many, many things beyond our fellows in the world of art, science, physics—yea, even in the world of Satanic rule and dominion: but these are not to be the chief ground of our rejoicing. Our happiness must flow from our state of grace in God, our prospect of heaven, the consciousness that we are safe against hell, and entitled to glory. Those are fleeting and uncertain—these enduring and Divine, &c., &c.

B.

Illustrations, &c.

Scripture Illustrations of that part of the text which speaks of the name being written in heaven may be found in Exodus

xxxii. 32; Ps. xix. 28; Isa. iv. 3; Dan. xii. 1; Phil. iv. 3; Heb. xii. 13; Rev. xiii. 8; xx. 12; xxi. 27.

To illustrate how rejoicing in our names being written in heaven should be more than any other rejoicing, see Matt. vii. 22, 23, and 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

HOW A MAN MAY KNOW HIS NAME IS WRITTEN IN HEAVEN.—A certain senator told his son the great honours which were apporportioned to a number of soldiers whose names were written in a book. The son was very desirous of seeing the book. The father showed him the outside, but the son wished to see it opened. That could not be allowed. It had been sealed by the council. "Then," said the son, "tell me if my name be there." The father replied, "The names are secreted to the senate." The son, studying to know more about the names of those soldiers in the book, desired to be told what were the merits of the soldiers. The father told him what were the noble achievements and worthy acts of valour by which they had secured such a register of their names in that distinguished book. "Such are written," he said, "and none but such must be written in this book." The son now began to examine whether he had such merits; and finding that he was altogether void of them, he repented, entered into a conflict with his own evil nature, became temperate, continent, valiant, and virtuous. When the soldiers came to receive their wreaths, he stepped forward to challenge one for himself. Being asked upon what title, he replied, "If honours be given to conquerors, I have gotten the noblest conquest of all." "Wherein?" "These have subdued strange foes, but I have conquered myself." Thus it is, that he who would know whether his name is written in heaven, let him look *within* and examine his state before God; let him live, and pray, and believe, and follow Jesus, as he is directed in the Scriptures, and he shall obtain the assurance of his heavenly citizenship, even as he sojourns on earth.

THE SECURITY OF CITIZENSHIP.—A man may have his name set down in the chronicles, and yet be lost; wrought in marble, yet perish; set upon a monument equal to a colossus, yet be ignominious; inscribed on the hospital gates, yet go to hell; written in the front of his house, yet another come to possess it. All these are but inscriptions in the dust or upon the waters, where the characters perish so soon as they are made; they no more

prove a man a Christian than the fool could prove Pontius Pilate one because his name was written in the Creed. But to have our name written in heaven, in the book of life, is a comfort such as nothing else can afford.—*Adams.*

IV.—QUENCHING THE SPIRIT.

“Quench not the Spirit.”—1 THESS. v. 19.

THE SPIRIT! *What is meant?* The Third Person of the Holy Trinity, who fills with light and fire the soul of every earnest, active Christian. This *light* is not to be put out; this *fire* is not to be quenched. “Quench not the Spirit.”

I. WHEREIN THE QUENCHING OF MATERIAL FIRE IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE QUENCHING OF THE SPIRIT.

1. *As fire may be quenched by not putting fuel thereon, so the Spirit may be quenched by the neglect of prayer, meditation, and reading the Word.*

Pray, and the fire will burn; neglect prayer, and it will soon go out.

Meditation is of excellent use. Meditate on God—on Christ—on the Spirit—on all good things. Let it be a constant and pleasant duty.

Reading the Word is indispensable. The Bible was given to make us perfect, and thoroughly to furnish us unto all good works.

2. *As fire may be quenched by not stirring it, so the Spirit may be quenched by the neglect of the ordinances of God's house.*

We must be constant and diligent in the cultivation of our souls, or the spiritual fire will go out. To maintain it is the grand object of the ordinances of God's house. Heb. x. 24, 25. If you neglect these.—(1.) You will become indifferent to them. (2.) You will lose all delight in them. (3.) You will be led to the neglect of other duties.

3. *As fire may be quenched by taking the fuel off, so the Spirit may be quenched by taking our powers from the altar upon which we had placed them for the service of God.* (1.) The affections of the heart must be fixed on God. Not partially, but wholly. Luke x. 27; Col. iii. 2. (2.) The energies of the soul must be devoted to the service of God. Let the spiritual flame develop every power.

“O may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will.”

4. *As fire may be quenched by pouring water thereon, so the Spirit may be quenched by associating with ungodly individuals.*

Fire and water are opposite elements. One cannot exist with the other. So with Christians and worldly individuals. The continuance of the Divine blessing upon the soul, and the maintenance of a truly religious character, demand a separation from the ungodly. Psalm i. 1, 6.

II. THE PROHIBITION RELATIVE TO THE SPIRIT: "Quench not the Spirit."

1. *Some reasons for not quenching the Spirit.* (1.) Because God kindled it. 2 Cor. iv. 6. (2.) Because God seeks to increase it. 2 Cor. iii. 18. Advancement is enjoined. 2 Peter i. 5, 8. (3.) Because God designs it to burn to everlasting life and glory. If we do not quench it, God will not, and it will never go out. 1 Tim. iv. 8; John xvii. 24.

2. *The results of quenching the Spirit.* (1.) We are unfitted for the worship of God. John iv. 24. (2.) We have no light to guide us to heaven. If we quench the Spirit we are in darkness—in darkness as to the future—darkness that can be felt. (3.) It may never be kindled again. Gen. vi. 3. We foolishly extinguish what God has wisely and mercifully kindled. It is a sin to quench the Holy Spirit of God, and should lay upon the conscience as a sin to be avoided.

In conclusion :—A word to the sinner. Does the Spirit strive with you? and are you brought under deep impressions of eternal things? Do not put away those serious thoughts, or the Spirit may give you up, and your convictions vanish, and you become as hard and careless as you are now anxious. "The evil days may come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Eccles. xii. 12. 1.

J. B. HORBERRY.

Illustrations.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S LIGHT.—A man has lost his way in a dark and dreary mine. By the light of one candle, which he carries in his hand, he is groping for the road to sunshine and to home. That light is essential to his safety. The mine has many winding passages, in which he may be hopelessly bewildered. Here and there marks have been made on the rocks to point out the true path, but he cannot see them without that light. There are many deep pits into which, if unwary, he may suddenly fall,

but he cannot avoid the danger without that. Should it go out, he must soon stumble, fall, perish. Should it go out, that mine will be his tomb. How carefully he carries it! How anxiously he shields it from sudden gusts of air, from water dropping on it, from everything that might quench it!

The case described is our own. We are like that lonely wanderer in the mine. Does he diligently keep alight the candle on which his life depends? Much more earnestly should we give heed to the warning, "Quench not the Spirit." Sin makes our road both dark and dangerous. If God gave us no light, we should never find the way to the soul's sunny home of holiness and heaven. We must despair of ever reaching our Father's house. We must perish in the darkness into which we have wandered. But He gives us His Spirit to enlighten, guide, and cheer us. In the works of nature, but more clearly in the Volume of Inspiration, He has made known to us His will. But because we are so sinful as not to see and profit by these signal-posts to heaven, He also, by the inward light of the Holy Ghost in the soul, helps us to behold, understand, and obey the truth.
—*Newman Hall.*

Light from Stars.

FREEDOM BY THE TRUTH.

BY REV. F. W. ROBERTSON.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—
JOHN viii. 32.

THE Son of man did not come to free the world by force, by legislation, or by civilisation. Civilisation does free—intellect equalises. Every step of civilisation is a victory over some lower instinct. But civilisation contains within itself the elements of a fresh servitude. Man conquers the powers of nature, and becomes in turn their slave. The workman is in bondage to the machinery which does his will; his hours, his wages, his personal habits are determined by it. The rich man fills his house with luxuries, and cannot do without them. A highly-civilised community is a very spectacle of servitude.

Man is there a slave to dress, to hours, to manners, to conventions, to etiquette. Things contrived to make his life more easy become his masters.

Therefore Jesus did not talk of the progress of the species, nor the growth of civilisation. He did not trust the world's hope of liberty to a right division of property. But He freed the inner man, that so the outer might become free too. "Ye shall know the truth, and the *truth* shall make you free."

Christ preached the truth—yea, He Himself was the Truth; and the Truth known and experienced is the true freedom of man.

Perhaps we have seen an insect or reptile imprisoned in wood or stone. How it got there is unknown. How the particles of wood in years, or of stone in ages, grew round it, is a mystery, but not a greater mystery than the question of how man became incarcerated in evil. At last the day of emancipation came. The axe stroke was given, and the light came in, and the warmth, and the gauze wings expanded, and the eye looked bright, and the living thing stepped forth, and you saw that there was not its home. Its home was the free air of heaven.

Christ taught that truth of the human soul. It is not in its right place. It never is in its right place in the dark prison-house of sin. Its home is freedom, and the breath of God's life.

Christ taught that this life is not all, that it is only a miserable state of human infancy. He taught that in words, and by His life, and by His resurrection.

This again was freedom. If there be a faith that cramps and enslaves the soul, it is the idea that this life is all. If there be one that expands and elevates, it is the thought of immortality; and this, observe, is something quite distinct from the selfish desire of happiness. It is not to enjoy, but to *be*, that we long for; to enter into more and higher life; a craving which we can only part with when we sink below humanity, and forfeit it.

This was the martyrs' strength. They were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might attain a better resurrection. In that hope, and the knowledge of that truth, they were free from the fear of pain and death.

It is not enough to define the liberty which Christ promises as freedom from sin. Many circumstances will exempt from sin which do not yet confer that liberty "where the Spirit of the

Lord is." Childhood, paralysis, ill-health, the impotence of old age may remove capacity, and even desire of transgression ; but the child, the paralytic, the old man, are not free through the truth.

Therefore, to this definition we must add, that one whom Christ liberates is free by his own will. It is not that he would and cannot, but that he can and will not. Christian liberty is right will, sustained by love, and made firm by faith in Christ.

This may be seen by considering the opposite of liberty—moral bondage. Go to the intemperate man in the morning, when his head aches, his hand trembles, his throat burns, and his whole frame is relaxed and unstrung ; he is ashamed, hates his sin, would not do it. Go to him at night, when the power of habit is on him like a spell, and he obeys the mastery of his craving. He can use the language of Rom. vii., "That which he would, he does not; but the evil that he hates, that he does."

Whenever a man would, and cannot, there is servitude. He may boast, as the Jews did, that he is Abraham's son, or any other great man's son ; that he belongs to a free country ; that he never was in bondage to any man ; but free in the freedom of the Son he is not.

The apprehension of pain, the fear of death, the dread of the world's laugh, of poverty, or the loss of reputation, enslave alike.

From such fear Christ frees, and through the power of the truths which He taught. He who lives in the habitual contemplation of immortality cannot be in bondage to time, or enslaved by transitory temptations. He who feels his soul's dignity, knowing what he is, and who, redeemed by God the Son, and freed by God the Spirit, cannot cringe, nor pollute himself, nor be mean. He who aspires to gaze undazzled on the intolerable brightness of that One before whom Israel veiled their faces, will scarcely quail before any earthly fear.

This is not picture-painting. These are things that have been. There have been men on this earth of God's, of whom it was simply true that it was easier to turn the sun from its course than turn them from the paths of honour. There have been men like John the Baptist, who could speak the truth which had

made their own spirits free, with the axe above their neck. There have been men redeemed in their inward being by Christ, on whom tyrants and mobs have done their worst; and when, like Stephen, the stones crashed in upon their brain, or when their flesh hissed and crackled in the flames, were calmly superior to it all. The power of evil had laid its shackles on the flesh, but the mind and the soul and the heart were free.

Cultivate the love of truth. The love of truth is the love of realities; the determination to rest upon facts, and not on semblances. Take an illustration of the way in which the habit of cultivating truth is got. Two boys see a misshapen, hideous object in the dark. One goes up to the cause of his terror, examines it, learns what it is; he knows the truth, and the truth has made him free. The other leaves it in mystery and unexplained vagueness, and is a slave for life to superstitions and indefinite terrors. Romance, prettiness, "dim religious light," awe and mystery—these are not the atmosphere of Christ's Gospel of liberty. Base the heart on facts. The truth alone can make free.—*Sermon xviii., vol. 1.*

Thoughts about Jesus.

BY A PREACHER.

JESUS was led by the Spirit into the hunger of the wilderness, but He would not, when tempted of the devil, miraculously make bread out of stones to satisfy His hunger, although He could have done. This would have been a submission to the devil, and a resistance of God. Neither must the Christian, in whatever trying circumstances placed by Providence, yield to Satan and resist God, in order to obtain deliverance.

THERE is no greater enemy in the universe to man than Satan, for he goeth about seeking to *devour* him; and there is no greater Friend than Jesus, for He seeks to *save* him.

NOTHING has ruined man in time, or can ruin him in eternity, but sin; and nothing can prevent that ruin but the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If there were an infinite number of worlds, and each world inhabited by an infinite number of sinners, Jesus as Intercessor with God were able to save them all. If they came to Him, provided they were included in the scheme of redemption, He could as easily save all as one.

SATAN came into this world from revenge towards God, and destroyed His works as existing in the moral perfection of man. Jesus came into this world from love to man, and destroys the works of the devil in man, and restores in him the works of God as gloriously perfect as at first. Thus the enemy is defeated, God is glorified, and man suffers no loss.

JESUS would not bow even one knee or one feeling to Satan for all the world, with its kingdoms, wealth, and power; shall I, for a few of its pence, a little of its earth, and a mite of its dominion? "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"—which he must do if he worship the devil.

THERE is no promise of God to meet a *presumptuous* and foolish act; therefore Jesus would not, as tempted by Satan, cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, although he quoted a promise which *seemed* to be applicable to such an act. I must do nothing precipitantly, *presumptuously*, foolishly, to claim the Divine promise. God will not *patronize* presumption, folly, and vanity.

THE afflicted woman said, "If I can but touch the *hem* of His garment, I shall be whole." She touched, and was whole. From which I may learn, that if I come by faith into contact with anything that belongs to Jesus as my Saviour, even the outer edge of His clothing, virtue will come from *Him*, and bless me.

It is said that Jonathan's soul was knit with the soul of David, and that Jonathan loved David as his own soul. Cannot I see here an emblem of that union subsisting between Jesus and me? He is the Vine, and I am a branch in Him. He is the Head, and I am a member in Him. He is in me the hope of glory. He dwells in my heart by faith. He is in me, and I am in Him. But in regard to the love, Jesus loved me more than His own soul, when "He poured out His soul unto death" in that bloody sweat, that my soul might have life for ever.

FROM the Mount at Capernaum Jesus pronounced blessings upon characters whom the world little esteemed; and so He does now from Mount Zion in the skies. The poor in spirit, the meek, the

mourner, the persecuted for righteousness, &c., though not the admired of nobles and princes, are the beloved of the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

WHEN the poor sinner comes to Jesus, Jesus meets him and shows Himself to be all he needs—light to disperse his darkness—mercy to forgive his sins—love to subdue his enmity—a Redeemer to rescue him from bondage—a teacher to instruct him and remove his ignorance—a fulness to meet his emptiness—in a word, his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption—his all in all.

If the cruelty and oppression of some ungodly men are so heavy and continuous, what are the same evils as exercised by their master, the devil? On the other hand, if the kindness and love of some Christians are so sweet and liberal, what must be the kindness and love of their Saviour?

THE poor leper said to Jesus, "If thou *wilt*, thou canst." Jesus said to the leper, "*I will*." Thus He met the leper according to his faith. Had the leper said, "If thou *canst*, thou wilt," Jesus would have said to him, "*I can*," and thus have met him in that way. Our faith has only to take hold of Jesus in some part of Him; and He responds to our faith accordingly.

THE prerogative to forgive is so fully invested in Jesus, that rebels in the Divine government are admonished to "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way."

SUCH is the empire, the majesty, and the power of Jesus, that kings and judges of the earth—the highest dignitaries in human governments—are advised to be instructed concerning Him, to serve Him with fear, and rejoice before Him with trembling. Their reign and triumph, their glory and successions, are all in His hands; they could not have a better ally than Jesus.

THOUGH Jesus was surrounded with angels, and the Proprietor of all worlds, and possessed all wisdom and power, He took "little children" in His arms and blessed them. This was like the huge sun-world nourishing a violet or daisy, and kissing a dew-drop in the bosom of a primrose.

JESUS is "THE LIFE." He came as such into the midst of a world of dead souls. He is still such in His Gospel and by His Spirit. He is THE LIFE, that He might give life to all who believe in Him, and give it more abundantly—more abundantly

than Adam could have given it, had he not fallen; more abundantly than the law could give it, even could men get life by the law; more abundantly than even his hopes, or reason, or faith would lead him to expect; more abundantly than what he can contain and enjoy in this world; more abundantly, that is, freely, constantly, without measure, without end.

(To be continued.)

Preacher's Counsellor.

ORIGINALITY.

ERRONEOUS views of the nature of originality prevent many persons attaining it. Some imagine that there can be nothing worth the name unless it be *absolutely* original, new to the human race; and as this can, of course, be very seldom achieved, they despair, and content themselves too commonly with taking ideas at second-hand. But as we have seen, relative originality of a very high order may exist where there is little or nothing of absolute addition to the stock of human knowledge, and may greatly augment a man's power. Some refrain from reading as a means of promoting originality, and thus condemn themselves to great mental barrenness. It would be as wise to avoid conversation. Who does not know the quickening, fructifying power of talk with an intelligent friend upon a subject we have been studying? Though nothing be directly borrowed, yet new thoughts are often *suggested*, and we are led to see more clearly what we had but dimly perceived. In general, we ought vigorously and patiently to think upon the subject before either reading or conversing upon it, otherwise the mind is in danger of merely following the track which others have marked out, instead of approaching the subject in its own manner. But after such personal reflection, then reading and conversation may be found highly stimulating and suggestive, leading to much that is really our own, but which, but for this contact with other minds, would not have occurred to us. A third class, by mistaking oddity or eccentricity for originality, misdirect and prevent their aspirations and powers, and not only fail to accomplish what they might have done, but prejudice many who make the

same mistake against the idea of trying to be original. And still another error is seen in the fact that credit for originality is often wrongly assigned. Some men really think profoundly, and develop views thoroughly their own, but as they state them with great clearness and simplicity, the masses think that anybody might have said that, and that they themselves knew it. Others, by holding up dim, formless phantoms of thought, by obscure, but high-wrought, peculiar, and impassioned language, are regarded as wonderfully original, when, if their ideas were brought out in a clear light, they would appear to be either nothing at all, or something very familiar. Thus it happens that aspiring minds, setting out in pursuit of originality, are sometimes led to seek it in affectations of style rather than in genuine, clear thinking.

Archbishop Whateley was fond of comparing this would-be original style to the case of Dean Swift's antiquary, who had found a Roman shield with some very curious and almost legible inscriptions, which he invited a party of friends to help him to decipher, but the cook having taken a notion to scour off the dust, it turned out to be an old pot-lid.—*Dr. Boardus.*

HIGH-SOUNDING PREACHERS.

THERE are some preachers so sonorous and fluent in mere wordiness, that their hearers are quite satisfied to hear the fluent, high-sounding wordiness, though there be within it great barrenness of thought, and no spiritual refreshment. The shallow people who have been accustomed to this sounding-brass and tinkling-cymbal preaching, cannot endure the ever fresh flow of living thought. For, being accustomed to a sound-and-ear ministry, and not being used to a thought-and-soul ministry, under the former they are in their element, but under the latter they are like fish out of water. In a spiritual element a carnal people cannot breath with freedom. To be popular, it is not enough that a man be a good talker, he must also be a shallow thinker. Abide in the low plain of thought, and the multitudes will throng you; but ascend to the mountain height of purer thought, and your multitudes will be reduced to a few disciples.—*J. Pulsford.*

Emblems from Gotthold.

THE MAGNET;

OR, BELIEVERS DOING RIGHT.

GOTTHOLD further said: By shoving and shaking you may move the magnetic needle from its place, but to that it returns the moment it is left to itself. In like manner, believers may fall into sin and deviate from the line of duty; but no sooner have they leisure for reflection, than they endeavour to mend their ways and resume a life of godliness. On the contrary, the wicked watch for opportunities of doing evil, and give themselves up to all the temptations of the devil and the world.

THE SORE;

OR, SIN AND BELIEVERS.

GOTTHOLD went on to say: To good men their sin and infirmity are festering sores, which give them pain, and from which they seek to be relieved. On the contrary, to the ungodly, sin and infirmity are a jewel, and regarded as a distinction and ornament.

My God! I beseech Thee, from my inmost heart, save me from the love of sin. Cause even the most venial faults to give me pain. Daily admonish and correct me, whether it be by Thy Word and Spirit, or by some sincere Christian friend, or by anxiety and heaviness of heart, or by the cross, or by whatever other means you please. When I have sinned, make me instantly sensible of it, and may I heartily and humbly seek pardon from Thee, and obtain it through Jesus Christ.

THE DOG BEFORE THE MIRROR;

OR, THE REFLECTION OF OURSELVES.

GOTTHOLD had a little dog, which, when placed before a mirror, became instantly enraged, and barked at its own image. He remarked on the occasion: In general, a mirror serves as an excitement to self-love, whereas it stimulates this dog to anger against itself. The animal cannot conceive that the figure it sees is only its own reflection, but fancies that it is a strange dog, and therefore will not suffer it to approach its master. This may remind us of an infirmity of our depraved hearts. We

often complain of others, and take offence at the things they do against us, without reflecting that, for the most part, the blame lies with ourselves. Men behave ill to us, because we behave ill to them. Our children are froward, because they have inherited and learned frowardness from us. *We are angry with them, and yet they are our own image.*

THE MONK IN SOLITUDE;

OR, THE EVIL IN OURSELVES AND NOT IN OUR SITUATION.

GOTTHOLD continued: I here recollect a pleasant story, told by a pious minister, about a monk of former days. The holy man resolved to leave his monastery, on the ground that he there too frequently met with causes of provocation, and was betrayed into anger and other sins. Accordingly, he retired into the desert, in the hope that solitude would enable him to serve God with a calmer mind. One day, however, his pitcher happened to be upset, and, when lifted up, fell a second time; which kindled his anger to such a pitch, that he dashed it to the ground, and broke it into a thousand pieces. On recovering himself, he said: I now see that I cannot have peace, even in solitude, and that the fault lies not in others, but in myself. He thereupon returned to the monastery, and, after many strenuous efforts, succeeded in subduing his passions, not by flight, but by mortification and self-denial.

THE BOILING-POT;

OR, THE EFFECTS OF RICHES.

A POT stood upon the grate, boiling with such violence that it overflowed, and nearly extinguished the fire. Gotthold saw it, and said to his family: 'Mark there an emblem of proud and haughty men. Their riches, ancestry, honours, and power, are live coals, which cause their hearts to seethe and bubble with sensuality, contempt of others, and conceit of themselves, till their insolent prosperity at last injures and subverts itself. One is the possessor of great wealth; but his heart boils with luxury, and pours itself fourth in pomp and profusion, and these gradually impair his means, and at last reduce him from opulence to poverty. Another is of noble and illustrious extraction, and fancies that high birth consists in freedom to follow his evil

inclinations; by which, however, he dims the lustre of his ancestors, so that they appear like coals from which the heat has departed. A third enjoys his prince's favour, and its usual fruits, honour, consequence, and power. But his mind cannot bear so hot a glow of fortune, and venting itself in crime, insolence, and reckless wickedness, these generally become the means of cooling his master's good will; and the consequence is, that all his prosperity vanishes away. Imagine not, however, that the lessons to be learned from this pot concern some men only, and not all, or others more than ourselves. All of us have hearts resembling it. Too great prosperity and success fill them with hot blood and overweening pride; and such a temper neither can nor will endure anything at the hand of another, but expects that others shall endure everything from it. It is shown by a haughty gait, an insolent deportment, insulting language, pomp of dress, and wilful acts. No task is so hard as to bear prosperity and good fortune with a humble mind.

My God! I distrust myself: great fortune might become to me a great misfortune. Thou often allottest prosperity in anger, and adversity in love. Whatever Thou pleasest to give, O give me with it a heart to bear my lot according to Thy will.

THE WATCHMAKER;

OR, GOD THE RULER OF ALL THINGS.

A FRIEND having remarked that he was often at a loss to discover any traces of the Divine government and providence in the affairs of the world, Gotthold said to him: Come, let us go to a watchmaker's. See, he has been making a valuable watch of a number of wheels, springs, pins, &c., exactly measured, jointed, and fitted to each other. There lie the parts, all having a different shape, size, and function, and all a certain order and place to which they belong. Do you think that you could put them together, and set them agoing? I very much doubt your ability. Make the attempt; expend upon it as much time and trouble as you please, and the only result will be, to convince you of the impossibility of constructing a whole from parts so dissimilar. Call an artist, however, to the task, and you will soon see what skill can do. *It is the same with the world. God has ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight. He has adapted cause to cause, assigned to all His creatures their*

definite actions, and finally, appended the weight of His omnipotence and wisdom to the whole fabric. Keep this in view when you wish to know what hour has struck.

My God! I thank Thee that Thy watchful eye is over all things, and that Thou governest them with mercy and wisdom. I thank Thee that the world goes not as man wills, but as Thou the Lord wilt. *In whom can I trust better than in Thee? How strangely soever, then, the world's affairs may sometimes seem to proceed, I will be dumb, and not open my mouth, because Thou doest it.*

Pulpit Illustrations.

ROM. xii. 21.—OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD.

THE chaplain of a little English squadron in the Mediterranean was wont to preach alternately on board all the vessels of the squadron but one. The captain of that was an irreligious, profane man, who wanted “no Methodist parson to pilot him to heaven,” and improved every opportunity to annoy him. Being of a violent temper, he also insulted the Commodore, who was on the point of sending him home. Hearing of his intention, the chaplain waited on the Commodore, saying he had come to ask a particular favour.

“It shall be granted,” said the Commodore. “I am always happy to oblige you. What is it?”

“That you will overlook the conduct of Captain S——.”

“Nay, nay; you can’t be serious. Is he not your greatest enemy; and, I believe, the only man in the fleet who does not wish to see you on board his ship!”

“That is the very reason why I ask the favour, Commodore. I must practise as well as preach.”

“Well, well, it’s an odd whim; but if, on reflection, I can grant your request without prejudice to His Majesty’s service, I will do it.”

The next day the chaplain renewed his petition.

“Well,” said he, “if Captain S—— will make a public apology, I will overlook his conduct.”

The chaplain instantly got into a boat, and rowed to Captain S——’s ship. He met him with a frown on his countenance; but when the chaplain told him his errand, a tear stood in his eye, and taking him by the hand, he said, “Mr. ——, I really don’t understand your religion; but I understand your conduct, and I thank you.”

The affair blew over, and he urged the chaplain to preach on board his ship.

MATT. xix. 21.—CHRIST A GOOD PAYMASTER.

A MINISTER living near to a philosopher, did often persuade him to become a Christian. "Oh, but," said the philosopher, "if I turn Christian I must or may lose all for Christ:" to whom and to which the minister replied, "If you lose anything for Christ He will repay it a hundred-fold." "Aye, but," said the philosopher, "will you be bond for Christ that if He do not pay me, you will?" "Yes, that I will," said the minister. So the philosopher became a Christian, and the minister entered into bond, and became a surety for the surety of the covenant. When this new Christian philosopher was on his sick and death-bed, he held this bond in his hand, and sent for the minister, to whom he gave up the bond, saying, "*Christ hath paid all*, there is nothing for you to pay." Surely, though a man be a loser *for* Christ, he shall be no loser *by* Christ. He will make amends for all.—*Venning*.

Outlines of a Sunday School Address.

THE TEN FAIRIES.

MY DEAR CHILDREN, I am going to speak to you about Fairies. You have, perhaps, heard of these imaginary beings, which are said to assume human form, and to visit in the night season workshops, and do the work of the men; and to visit houses, and run away with infants; and to visit meadows and dance, making those fairy rings which you have sometimes seen in the grass. These fairies are mere fiction, and the stories which are told about them are not to be received as facts.

But there are other things which may be called fairies besides these. A little girl once wished she could call a fairy to do her work for her, but her brother told her that she had no need to do that, as she always had ten of them with her that would do it for her. Now, the fairies which the brother meant were his sister's *ten fingers*.

But these are not the ten fairies of which I am going to speak. The fairies that I am thinking about are such as you may have when you please to call them. They are not far away, but when they come they will not frighten you, because they are all so beautiful, and as companions, they will do you good, and as help-meets in what you have to do, they are beyond all price.

Now, I do not suppose you could tell me what their names are if I was to ask you. I shall therefore describe them, and ask you to tell me the name of each as I describe it:—

The *first* is a plain, trim little figure, always neat and tidy-looking, not a speck of dust on his clothes, not a thread wanting from his shirt-collar to his shoe-string. He carries a little flag waving over his shoulder, and on the flag is written the motto, "A place for everything, and everything in its place." This is the fairy gentleman that I call for before I begin my work, and what he does for me is to find me all I want. You cannot think how quickly he finds it. He knows exactly where to put his finger on everything. Can you tell me the name of this fairy? (*Order.*)

The *second* is a light-footed damsel. She is here, and there, and everywhere, always busy and always quick. As she flits about, you hear her humming—

"I am not made for idle play,
Like a butterfly all day;
Busy I must be, and do
What is right and useful too."

This is the fairy which I engage to do for me the things that I want. Can you tell me her name? (*Industry or Activity.*)

Now for my *third* fairy. She wears a garland round her head, and twined round the garland is a scroll on which these words are worked, "Do it with thy might." She never forgets the words on that scroll. She does one thing at a time, and does it heartily. Her eyes are fixed on what she has in hand. As soon as she puts her fingers to my work, you would be surprised to see how fast it gets on. I have to watch her, though, to see that she does not go away before the work is finished. What is the name of this fairy? (*Diligence.*)

When I think Diligence is likely to leave off too soon, I call for another of my helpers—a sturdy, firm-set, stout-built, determined-looking fellow, who keeps the work going. He comes steadily up to the side of Diligence, and whispers something into her ear, and her fingers again begin to move like lightning. Once I heard him say to her, "Well begun is only half done;" another time he said, "Wish it not done, but *do* it." He is very sparing of his words, but what he says is always to the purpose. Can you give the name of this fairy? (*Resolution.*)

You have seen what are called fairy-rings. You know how fresh and soft the grass looks in those beautiful rounds, just as if fairy feet had been dancing there. One of my fairies leaves a velvet track wherever he goes. And he brings a little sister fairy with him, and as they dance together, the sister, with her sweet clear voice, sings such a number of lively airs that she makes my work go on pleasantly and joyfully. Can you tell me the names of these two fairies? (*Good-humour and Cheerfulness.*)

My seventh fairy is a charming little cherub, with silver wings, who flies to do whatever has to be done. He carries in his hand a magic wand, round the top of which his name is written, a name of only four letters. When he has a heavy burden to lift, he touches it with his wand, and the burden becomes light. Or if he has to handle anything rough, he lays his wand across it, and it becomes soft. I like to have his help, because he makes my work so easy. Once he opened his little wand, and showed me that it could divide into two parts, and each had writing inside. On the one was, "Love one another with a pure heart fervently." On the other, "Love Him who first loved thee." If either half of the wand was used alone, I found it did much to lighten my task; but it was when both parts were put together, that my task became lightest. What is the name of this fairy? (*Love.*)

This little beauty never comes alone. He brings with him a fair-haired, blue-eyed companion. She carries a little anchor in her hand, and sometimes she fixes this anchor, and leans on it with one hand, while with the other hand she points forward and upward, still repeating—

"If you find your task is hard,
Try, try, try again;
Time will bring you your reward,
Try, try, try again."

What is the name of this fairy? (*Hope.*)

But Hope might fasten her anchor in an unsafe place; and then she would fall to the ground. So I call for another of her sisters to come with her. This sister of hers has a Book which shows her what ground is safe and what is unsafe for Hope's anchor to rest in; and she has a strong hand with which she helps to fix the anchor deep into the good ground, which is always within sight of the Cross. She holds her Book open at the page where it is written, "I will help thee;" and then she whispers to Hope—

"On thy Father's help rely;
Trust, and try—trust, and try."

What is the name of this fairy? (*Faith or Trust.*)

There is one more fairy to make up the ten. She is a firm, unyielding little creature, that stands at no difficulties, and gives up only with the finish of the work. What is the name of this fairy? (*Perseverance.*)

Here, then, my children, are the ten fairies which you may have at your call, to be your life-long companions, to help you in doing all things which you have to do, both for this life and for that which is to come.

B.

Books.

Bringing in Sheaves. By A. B. EARLE. London: Morgan & Scott. 23, Warwick-lane, Paternoster-row. —A small book, giving account of evangelistic labours in the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This is a soul-stirring little work. The Lay Preacher will do well to buy it, and get his heart warmed by reading it. —*The Bristol Orphan Houses, Ashley Down*, by W. ELFE TAYLOR, is the name of another work recently issued by Morgan and Scott. It is deeply interesting to read the history of these Houses, under the humane management of Mr. Müller. Here are marvellous illustrations of the power of faith, patience, and prayer. He who reads them must be stimulated to a further consecration of himself to God and His work. —*The Biblical Museum.* —By J. C. GRAY. London: Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster-row. —This is the first volume of Mr. Gray's Notes on the New Testament. It includes Matthew and Mark. The diligence and research of Mr. Gray to bring together such a compilation of useful materials must have been very great. The work will prove highly serviceable to Sunday School teachers, and all who are engaged in expounding the Holy Scriptures. —*A Christian Woman* is the name of a little tract just published by Mr. Stock. —*An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews.* By Rev. H. W. WILLIAMS. London: Wesleyan Conference Office. —In this work the author sustains his ability as an expounder of God's Word. His views of the various doctrinal and critical points in this epistle are clear, forcible, and satisfactory. A Lay Preacher wanting a thoroughly reliable exposition of this epistle, could not do better than purchase it. —*Memoirs of the Life, Cha-*

racter, and Labours of the Rev. John Smith is just issued by the Wesleyan Book-Room in a new and cheap edition. We presume there are few of our readers but what are acquainted with these memoirs. Those who are not we urgently recommend them to get the volume and read it. We well remember the powerful spiritual influence it exerted on our own mind when we read it nearly thirty years ago. —*The Class and the Desk. A Manual for Sunday School Teachers.* The Epistles. By C. S. CAREY. London: J. Sangster & Co., 31, Paternoster-row. —This is a work compiled on the same plan as *The Class and the Desk*, by J. C. Gray, and may be purchased as a companion to that, although we think it scarcely equal. —*The Rev. W. M. Punshon, M.A. A Sketch of his Life, with Sermons* recently preached by him in London, and a variety of Choice Selections from his public Addresses, Discourses, and Writings. London: A. OSBORNE, 29, Farringdon-street. —This is a volume which every lover and admirer of Punshon will be pleased to see and to own. The getting up of the volume does the printer and the publisher great credit. We trust this work will sell as it deserves, by the tens of thousands. —*The Christ for all the Ages*; and other Lay Sermons, preached on the North Wales Border. By D. C. DAVIES. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 27, Paternoster-row. —Here are good thought and good doctrine with style equally good. But we think either the author or publisher has made a sad mistake in placing *five shillings* as their price. We think this is too much by one-half for fifteen sermons, filling only 191 pages of crown octavo, with lines thickly leaded.



THE LAY PREACHER.

Science and Christianity.

WHAT we have to say on this subject we shall endeavour to say plainly and practically, with a due regard to the fidelity that we owe to the interests which the *Lay Preacher* is meant to promote.

We wish the term *science* to be understood in a general sense, as used in the schools and among scholars. We wish the term *Christianity* to be understood as denoting that religion which is portrayed in the life of Jesus Christ, and in the lives and writings of His holy apostles.

This is an age in which much ado is made about science; so much so, that there seems a danger lest it should take the place of Christianity, and we should have the *Gospel according to science* substituted for the *Gospel according to Christ*. We think we see this danger not only from purely scientific quarters, but from quarters in which we should ever expect to see the Gospel standard supreme in thought, feeling, and action.

Science is honourable, and has an honourable place in the intellectual world; but it must not stand above or even on a level with Christianity. It is neither its king,

queen, or peer. Christianity is a Divine *religion*, whose spirit and power are *within us*. It is chiefly a subject for *experience* and *practice*. It affects our moral principles, motives, affections, deeds. Its aim is to bring us unto "Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." Heb. xii. 22-24.

This does not science. The sphere of its operation is the region of the intellect. Its action is in thought and speculation, resulting in experiments upon nature, art, mechanics, producing wonder, it may be, in the spectators, and beneficial effects of a temporal kind upon society. It touches not the heart of man to renew it, and to elevate it into a higher life with its God and Saviour. Christianity thrived most when it was free from the connection of science, as when it was free from the connection of the State. We appeal to the history of Christianity in her *spiritual* work, in nations, churches, families, and individuals, in proof of this.

There are certain things in nature which are only beautiful, fragrant, and useful, as they exist in their own original simplicity, untouched, unaltered, unmodified by the hand of man. Who can improve the sun in its light and sphere? Who can improve the arch or colours of the rainbow? Who can add purity to the virgin snow? Thus Christianity is a religion which no science can increase in moral beauty, in Divine truth, in spiritual life and power. Science may bring its garlands and its robes of many colours, and dress Christianity as it thinks she ought to be; but after all, if you want to get at

her heart, and feel its pulsation, you must doff the whole. And if you want to get the *action* and *works* of her *life*, you get them not from her artificial embellishments, but from the exercise of her faculties of faith, love, and zeal. By these, she does her deeds of charity, heroism, mercy, and truth in the face of the nations, and not by the aid of science. "My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus; "if it was, then would my servants fight." "The kingdom of God is within you." "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." What can be plainer words, to show that Christianity is above the verbiage and hollowness of words, above the region of observation, as men's works, as natural laws and scientific speculations; above the organisations, the philosophies, the thrones, the whole range of things which make up the kingdoms of this world.

We say, then, let science keep its sphere, let it attend to its proper work, let it not be haughty or aspire after things too high for it, let it not think to add light to the sun, or roundness to the globe, or colours to the rainbow. A ploughman who knows not the meaning of the word "science," with the spiritual life of Christianity in his experience, shall teach your men of science more than they have ever dreamt of in all their philosophy.

The want of the age in reference to Christianity is for the world to take knowledge of Christians that they *have been with Jesus*. Not by the acquisition of languages, not by the discoveries of science, not by the solution of problems, not by the knowledge of books, do *Christians* want to be known, but *by having been with Jesus*. There is no other way in which they can be known as followers of Him. It is the likeness, the Spirit, the works of Jesus seen in Christians, by which they are known as such. All else is extraneous and nothing to the point.

Let it not be inferred that because we thus write, we are opposed to the study and promulgation of science. Far from it. We would that all the Lord's servants were adepts in this branch of earthly knowledge. What we plead for is, that the pursuit and practice of science should not interfere with the pursuit and practice of Christianity; should not encroach upon her doctrines, her precepts, her life; should not presume to know more of her than she knows of herself; should not assume her place in teaching or doing good; should not attempt to give light in her sphere and roll in her orbit; should not utter her "Thus saith science" before Christianity's "Thus saith the Lord;" should not know so little of itself, or think so little of others, as to offer the teachings of Huxley, Darwin, &c., instead of or as superior to the teachings of the Scriptures. We plead that Christianity, like its Lord, should in all things have the pre-eminence; should occupy the throne; should be the sun in the system; should be the heart in the body; should be the only panacea for all the world's moral maladies, and the only elevating power to lift man up from the ruins of his fall into "glory, honour, immortality, eternal life."

All this Christianity is, and whoever studies her as he ought, will find it so. We demand such a study of her on the part of all her professors. We do so especially on the part of those who are her public teachers and defenders. You, brethren, should be profound students of Christianity in all those ways which will bring you into such knowledge and experience as will enable you to bring her forth in her intrinsic glories, so that she may be seen by your hearers as moving in a sphere, and conferring benefits, and having claims upon their belief and reception, far, far beyond any science which the world has ever known or can know. You are preachers of Christianity, and not of science; therefore, study her as such. Lecturers and

writers on science, as such, study science; hence their discoveries, their power, their eminence. You should, according to your gifts and means, so give yourselves to the study of Christianity, that you might occupy an analogous place in the interests of Christianity. There is far more sublimity in your study than in theirs. They are in the outer temple, or at the footstool; you are in the holy of holies, and before the throne. They study in the laboratory of nature, you in the heart, the affection, the whole Fatherhood of nature's God. They, after all their studies, can only bring forth a light for the intellect, a light which cannot shine above earth's things and atmosphere; you may bring forth a light which, while it shines into the intellect, shines into the heart; which, while it illumines earth's things and atmosphere, casts its glorious rays all over the heavens, and away into the interminable regions of an endless existence. They are at the foot of the mount, finding out, it may be, how to make a calf of gold for worship, while you are on the mount with God, receiving at His hands the Divine laws for human worship of the Supreme One, and laws for human conduct in all things pertaining to this life and the higher life of his spiritual nature. They are found, it may be, feasting and revelling around their idol, while you come down all environed with Divine glory, and invested with Divine authority to denounce their idolatry and demolish their idols.

We know that a great deal is said in certain quarters about preachers being up with the times in the knowledge of things which are militating against the progress of Christianity. This is all very well; but it is query whether in taking this advice they would not lose more on the one hand than they would gain on the other; that is, whether studying science with a view to rebut its fallacies against Christianity, they would not so neglect the study of

Christianity itself as to fall under the influences of the very fallacies for the confuting of which they read and studied.

We believe, as we have said, that Christianity, as a religion for the heart and life, needs not science to assist in her comprehension, enjoyment, and practice. Like the sun, she is her own light and revealer; and although men may speculate and dogmatise, yet they can arrive at no just conclusion only as *she* gives them light, as all the correct knowledge of the day's orb must be obtained in *its own shining*.

Christianity came not into the world as the child of science, and it needs not its patronage to sustain and extend it. One mightier than it, the latchet of whose shoes it is not worthy to unloose, gave it origin; and it is only in His hands that it can maintain its course of purity and power.

What we have to say, then, to Lay Preachers who would best combat with the scientific obstacles to Christianity, is, study Christianity in the person of Christ, as He is revealed in the Scriptures. Let Christianity and Christ be synonyms to you, so that in preaching and living Christianity, you will be preaching and living Christ. Christianity without Christ is like the sun without its light. Let Christ in His holy life and atoning death be the Christianity of the age, preached in our pulpits, portrayed in our writings, exemplified in our conduct, and science shall do no more to turn men from it or against it, than the speculations of learned school-boys in turning workmen from and against the light of day while shining directly upon their eyes, their hands, and their work.

A more thorough, direct, and prayerful study of Christianity in Christ as contained in the Scriptures, is the great need of the day on the part of all preachers and all Christians. This would secure a power in the pulpit and in the life which would soon lift up Christianity into a sphere in which she would be "as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoice as a strong man to run a race."

Biblical and Theological Themes.

SANCTIFICATION.

THE term "*sanctify*" is very common in the Old Testament. It was used in setting apart persons for peculiar office, and things to a holy use. Hence the vessels of the sanctuary, its furniture, &c., were said to be sanctified, when set apart to holy uses. But this is not the New Testament signification of the term. The term as applied to Christians means that work of the Holy Spirit by which they are set apart for God's service, renewed after the image of God, and made meet for the inheritance above. "To sanctify," says Bishop Beveridge, "in a general sense is to cleanse, purify, or make holy. It is derived from the Latin *sanctus*, holy, and *facio*, to make. In particular, it implies to cleanse from corruption, to purify from sin, to make holy by detaching the affections from the world and its defilements, and exalting them to a supreme love to God." Observe—

1. *Sanctification is a Divine principle.* It is wrought in the inner man by the Holy Ghost through Christ. Ps. li. 10; 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. This principle becometh every Christian. Ps. xciii. 5. It is the beauty of the soul. Ps. xxix. 2. Necessary to the service of God. Ps. xxiv. 3, 4; Luke i. 74, 75.

2. *Sanctification begins in justification.* (See Outline on Justification, vol. ii., page 374.) In the moment that the believing sinner is justified, he is also "born again," and therefore sanctified. A *real* as well as a *relative* change is effected. Justification is complete at once, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Sanctification most clearly defines a progressive or instantaneous work, which, when completed, we call *entire sanctification* or *full salvation*. Sanctification cannot be complete till saved from the guilt, dominion, and love of sin, whether accomplished progressively or instantaneously. "That the regeneration," says Rev. R. Watson, "which accompanies justification is a large approach to this state of perfect holiness, and that all dying to sin and all growth in grace advance us nearer to this point of entire sanctity is so obvious, that on these points there can be no reasonable dispute. But they are not at all incon-

sistent with a more instantaneous work when the depth of our natural depravity, being more painfully felt, we plead in faith the accomplishment of the promises of God."

Christians are called to holiness. 1 Thess. iv. 7; 2 Tim. i. 9. Are to seek perfection. 2 Cor. vii. 1. To follow after it. Heb. xii. 14. To yield their members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Rom. vi. 13, 19. To possess it. 1 Cor. iii. 17; Heb. xii. 1.

3. *The Bible teaches a further deliverance from sin, a higher attainment in love than the term sanctification signifies, unless qualified by the word entire or complete, which gives to it a higher signification, and makes it equivalent to holiness.* 2 Cor. vii. 1. When we regard sanctification and holiness as synonymous terms, and use them interchangeably, we fail to give a clear and definite idea of Christian holiness. They are not duplicates of the same idea. Sanctification and holiness, or entire sanctification, cover different spaces of meaning. All Christians are sanctified. Acts xxvi. 18; 1 Cor. vi. 11. But all are not sanctified wholly: So it was with the Thessalonians. 1 Thess. v. 23. The opinion of some that part of the Thessalonians were sanctified wholly, and that Paul prayed that the whole of them might be thus sanctified, is destroyed by the apostle's reference to the distinctive parts of their being—viz., "body, soul, and spirit." The idea is that they were sanctified partially, but not wholly; and, therefore, Paul prays for the completion of the Spirit's work.

What is *entire* sanctification? It is not absolute, or angelic, or Adamic perfection. Nor is it the freedom of Christians from human infirmities, or the temptations and conflicts of the present life. Nor is it the destruction of all their natural passions and propensities. Nor are they brought into a state in which it is impossible for them to sin. What is it, then? The Bible gives the most clear and satisfactory answer. Read it. Matt. xxii. 37-40.

Entire sanctification is that maturity in grace and participation of the Divine nature which excludes all sin from the heart, and fills the soul with perfect love to God and man. The whole being is consecrated to God, and all the faculties and affections are so entirely changed, that they approve of and cleave to that which is right, and hate and shun that which is wrong.

It is the sanctification wholly of "body, soul, and spirit."

The notion that man consists of three distinct parts is a very ancient one. Many of the ancients held it in their philosophy. The body they regarded as man's corporeal, organised system; the soul as the seat of the affections, passions, &c.; the spirit as his thinking and immortal part. Paul takes advantage of this notion to show the completeness of the Spirit's work. The modern idea is that man consists of two parts, body and soul; the term spirit and soul being mostly used in the same sense. And yet there is a sense in which we adhere to the ancient notion. We speak of man's intellectual part, and in speaking of this we use the term *spirit*; of his emotional part, the *soul*; and of his material part, the *body*. Therefore, according to Paul's prayer, the whole man, his intellectual, emotional, and physical nature, or body, soul, and spirit, may be sanctified wholly and preserved therein.

Christians are to have their fruit unto holiness. Rom. vi. 22. To have their conversation in holiness. 1 Pet. i. 15; 2 Pet. iii. 11. To avoid everything inconsistent with holiness. Isa. lii. 11; Lev. xxi. 6. To continue in holiness. Luke i. 75. To be examples of holiness. 1 Tim. iv. 12.

4. *Sanctification is progressive in degree.* Entire sanctification progressive? Yes. To say that sanctification is progressive in its nature is absurd. A drop of water taken from the mighty ocean is the same in its nature or quality as the ocean itself, but not in degree or quantity. Grace received from the inexhaustible fulness of Christ is as perfect in its nature as the fulness of Christ itself, but not in its degree. It is in degree that Christians advance. They go on from "strength to strength," from "grace to grace," from "glory to glory." It is a perpetual advance. One degree of grace leads them on to another degree. Phil. iii. 12-15. Though at first like "new-born babes," they afterwards attain to more maturity—to "the full stature of a man in Christ." Hence we understand to whom John writes under the headings of "Little children," "young men," and "fathers." 1 John ii., &c.

The error of the present is in confounding *the manner of the attainment of Christian holiness* with *the progression of the soul in holiness* after this attainment. The manner in which God sanctifies the believer wholly is a distinct thing. There may be a progressive work going on in some before they are sanctified

wholly; but, no doubt, it is almost, if not always, an instantaneous work. "Now is the accepted time."

Purity is an instantaneous work. All are to be holy, to "serve God without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of their life." Luke i. 75. Little children as well as fathers. But *maturity* in holiness is a work of time. First, "little children;" then, "young men;" then, "fathers" in Christ. By development, growth, and discipline alone, spiritual manhood is attained. Heb. vi. 1; 2 Pet. i. 5-8.

5. *Sanctification is attained by faith.* "Faith," says Rev. J. Wesley, "is the condition, and the only condition of sanctification, exactly as it is of justification." Matt. xxi. 22. With God all things are possible. Therefore He is *infinitely able*. He is *infinitely willing*. 1 Thess. iv. 3. The believing soul rests on this, and lays hold of God, holds Him, and will not let Him go.

(1.) Takes the Father to be his God. 1 Thess. i. 9.

(2.) Takes the Son to be his Saviour. Acts v. 31.

(3.) Takes the Holy Spirit to be his Sanctifier. 1 Pet. i. 2.

(4.) Takes the Bible to be his guide. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

(5.) Takes the people of God to be his people. Ruth i. 16, 17.

(6.) Consecrates body, spirit, soul, to be the Lord's. Rom. xiv. 7, 8; deliberately, Josh. xxiv. 15; sincerely, 2 Cor. i. 12; freely, Ps. cx. 3; and for ever, Rom. viii. 35-39. There is no being sanctified wholly without faith.

God commands it. 1 Pet. i. 16; Matt. v. 48; Ps. iv. 4; Rom. xii. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 34; 1 Thess. v. 16-18; Heb. vi. 1.

God promises it. Isa. i. 18-25; Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27; Titus ii. 14; 1 John i. 9.

God wills it. 1 Thess. iv. 3; Eph. v. 18; Col. iv. 12.

Many have been sanctified wholly. Gen. v. 24; vi. 9; Job i. 1; Luke i. 6, &c.

It is exemplified. In David, Ps. lxxxvi. 2; Israel, Jer. ii. 3; Prophets, Luke i. 70; Paul, 1 Thess. ii. 10; and others.

Holiness maketh rich. Prov. iii. 13-15. The soul

"Enriched with saving grace,
Can covet nothing more."

Promotes usefulness. Ps. i. 3; 2 Cor. iii. 3. Meetens for glory. Matt. v. 8; xxv. 46; Heb. xii. 14. "FINALLY, BRETHREN, BE PERFECT."

Rugby.

J. B. HOBERRY.

Expositions of some of the shorter Psalms.

BY THE REV. THORNLEY SMITH.

PSALM II.

THIS Psalm has no superscription, and its authorship is very doubtful. In Acts iv. 25, it appears to be ascribed to David, and many of the oldest Jewish interpreters of it attributed it to him. Those who think David was the author suppose that it refers either to the attacks made upon him by the Philistines, or to the coalition of the nations referred to in 2 Sam. x. 6; compare viii. 3-12. But several recent commentators doubt the Davidic authorship, and ascribe it to the times of Ahaz or Hezekiah, supposing that it alludes to some such national event as is spoken of in Isaiah vii., or in Isaiah xxxvi., xxxvii.

That it is a Messianic Psalm nearly all expositors admit; and, indeed, the references to it in the New Testament are sufficient to establish the fact beyond all controversy. No Psalm is quoted so frequently in the New Testament as this, and in every instance it is applied to Christ as the Saviour and the Judge of men. (See Acts iv. 25, 26; Luke xix. 14; Acts v. 31; xiii. 33; Rom. i. 4; John i. 49; Matt. xxvi. 63; Heb. i. 5, 8; Rev. vi. 17; xiv. 7; xix. 15; &c.)

In some ancient MSS. this and the first Psalm are written as one, and the word *blessed* is the first word and the last. In others, the first Psalm appears as an introduction, and is not numbered at all, whilst this is considered the first Psalm. There is, in fact, no real connection between the two, for the first belongs to a time of peace, the second to a period of conflict and of war.

The form of this Psalm is dramatic, and it consists of four strophes, each containing three verses.

I. THE ASTONISHMENT OF THE PSALMIST at the opposition of the nations to the Anointed of Jehovah. The Psalm begins abruptly; for the poet, seeing the crowd of warriors who are mustering for battle, is amazed at the sight, and fired with indignation, asks why, or for what cause they have taken up their arms. Verses 1-3. Observe—

1. *The persons* against whom they rage—Jehovah and His Anointed. The two are one—God and the Son of God. For “His Anointed” can be none other than the Messiah, the Christ who should come into the world to redeem and save it, and to set up a kingdom of righteousness and peace. Aaron and his successors were anointed to the priestly office; Samuel and his successors to the prophetic office; and David and his successors

to the kingly office; but Jesus, the Son of God, was anointed to all the three offices, being filled by the Spirit without measure, and thus constituted the Prophet of the Highest, the Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, and the King of righteousness and truth and peace. Yet it was against Him that the nations raged; against Him that the kings of the earth set themselves. It was so in the days of His flesh; and it is so still. The Church is a militant Church, but it is not so much against her, as against her Head and Lord that her enemies rage and are so furious. What, then, has she to fear? They can only reach her through Him, but He ever lives, and lives to defend His own.

2. *The parties* who displayed their opposition. They are called "the nations and the people; the kings of the earth and the rulers." By "the nations" are meant *the heathen*; by "the people," *the Jews*. By "the kings" are meant *the mighty monarchs of the earth*; by "the rulers," *those of the Jewish people*. All these were confederate together; all these assumed an attitude of hostility. Read the history of your Lord, the history of His birth, of His ministry, and of His death, and you will see at once the fulfilment of the Psalmist's words. Did not Herod, and Pontius Pilate, and Caiaphas rage against the Son of God, and take counsel together, and ultimately nail Him to the cross? Gentiles and Jews alike were opposed to His government and rule, and were determined to get rid of Him, and to put an end to His pretensions. But in this they imagined vainly. They could do only what the counsel of God predetermined should be done; and notwithstanding all their malice, rage, and cunning, Christ became, and now is, the Ruler of the world.

3. *Their menace*. The writer hears them say, "Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us." The nations could not brook the restraint under which God's Anointed One would place them. They wanted to have their own way. They wished to govern and to be governed by laws of their own devising. The bonds of truth and righteousness they would therefore break; the cords of discipline and guidance they would therefore cast asunder. "We will not have this man to reign over us," was their cry, and they trampled His authority under foot. They raged as they said this, with a burning and consuming heat; or as the sea when it tosses itself in its wildest fury. What a scene was that when the multitudes cried, "Away with Him, away with Him! Not this man, but Barabbas." Well might the prophet ask the question, *Why?* But even to this day the same spirit of insubordination is displayed. The enemies of Christ find it an

irksome thing to submit to His authority ; and there are multitudes who would rather put their necks under the yoke of a supposed infallible Pope, than under that of the gracious Saviour of mankind.

II. THE TREATMENT they receive from the Lord Jehovah. The poet, in the midst of the confusion which he sees around him, and which causes him so much indignation and surprise, lifts his eyes to heaven, and soon learns that all their attempts are futile and ridiculous. Verses 4-6.

1. Mark *the position which God occupies*. "He sitteth in the heavens." On earth the psalmist hears the noise of a fearful tempest, occasioned by the gathering together of the nations to put down the government of the Son of God ; but in heaven he sees Jehovah seated on His throne in the calmness of His Divine majesty, as if He heeded not their boasting, and was unmoved by all their rage. And it is ever so. Amid the tumult of the nations, the persecutions and sufferings of the Church, the raging of the enemies of our Anointed Lord, God sits on high, waiting until He shall see fit to interfere ; and He is ever watching over His people, who, as Luther says, have their Herods and their Pilates taking counsel against them, but who, whilst they trust in the arm of the Omnipotent, can never be destroyed.

2. *The manner in which He regards His enemies*. "He laughs, and has them in derision." He laughs in calm contempt ; He has them in derision, in deep displeasure. There is nothing that the great of this world feel so much as to be laughed at and looked upon with contempt and scorn. They seek after honour. They want everyone to bow down to them. They covet universal homage. But if, instead of this, they meet with defiance, they are filled with vexation, and are ready to die with fear. Well, then, may they tremble when God laughs at them ! when the Most High has them in derision ! I can bear the scornful laugh of men, if only I possess an approving conscience ; but I cannot bear to be laughed at by Him who made me. Let the world treat me with derision, if it choose ; but the derision of Jehovah would scathe me like the lightning's flash. Yet it is thus that God will treat the infinitely little foe that defies His power with such contempt, so that he will sink into the very dust, and be glad to hide his head.

3. *The words of indignation in which He addresses them*. "Then shall He speak to them," &c. And what shall He say ? "But," your rage and malice notwithstanding, "I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." This is the central truth of the Psalm, and the "I"—is the most emphatic word in it. I—the King of earth and heaven—have set my King—My Vicegerent, My Son—on the throne of Zion—the centre of His dominion—

where He shall reign as King for ever. How vain, then, is the opposition of men! Christ is the exalted One, and "must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet." 1 Cor. xv. 25; Psalm cx. 2. The hill of Zion here is not Jerusalem, but the Church of which Jerusalem was the type, in which He now reigns, and to which He will draw all men who do not obstinately resist His will.

III. THE DIVINE DECREE which the Anointed One has heard. Verses 7-9. In the vision of the psalmist the King Himself appears, and makes proclamation to the astonished rebels. "I will tell you of a decree," He says. "I will declare what Jehovah said unto me?" And what was the decree?

1. "*Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.*" These words are quoted by St. Paul (Rom. i. 4), as having reference to our Lord's resurrection, for then it was that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power, and that He was begotten again from the dead, and placed on the holy hill of Zion. But this Sonship was based upon the eternal and literal Sonship, and the words therefore occur again in Heb. i. 5, where doubtless they refer to the proper Sonship of our Lord, who is said to be "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person." He then who, in His Divine nature, was the Son of God from all eternity, is now declared to be the Son of God in His Divine and human natures conjoined; and, begotten from the dead, is exalted to the right hand of power, above all the hierarchies of heaven. To such a Son the Father will grant whatever He requires; hence the decree goes on—

2. "*Ask of me,*" &c. It is His Father's will that His Son shall have universal dominion, and the Son has but to ask, and He obtains the nations as His inheritance, the whole earth as His possession. He is to reign over Jews and Gentiles alike. All the tribes and families of mankind are to be brought under His control, and all are to acknowledge Him as their King and Lord. Only to a limited extent is this the case as yet, but He has only to ask, and it shall be done. Why, then, does He not ask? some, perhaps, will say. The answer is, He does ask, and is always asking, but He is not impatient, for He knows that it must come to pass in due time, but as the result of the wider proclamation of the Gospel, and the universal outpouring of the Holy Ghost. And then—

3. "*Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron,*" &c. Christ is the Judge as well as the Saviour of men. He is a Shepherd to those who submit to Him, and leads them with a gentle hand. Ps. xxiii. 1-3. But He is an enemy to those who persistently oppose Him, and rules them with an iron rod. Men say, We will not have Him as our King, and yet their King He is; and

He checks their rage, confounds their purposes, and frustrates their designs. Nay, if they still rebel, He breaks them to pieces as a potter's vessel, than which nothing is more easily broken. Framed of a most brittle substance, the potter's vessel has only to be thrown on the ground, and it is dashed into a hundred pieces; nor can it be joined together again by any human skill whatever. Now, has not this prediction been already fulfilled? Where are the nations which once proudly set themselves in opposition to the government of Christ?—imperial Rome, classic Greece, or the Jewish people, once the elect of God? They have been literally dashed to pieces. The remains of the latter are scattered over the whole earth, and one day they may be gathered up, but none except the great Potter Himself can re-fashion them and make them a vessel fit for use. And what will become of the nations who resist Christ's power and authority now? Ere long, if they repent not, they will be broken in like manner, and not a vestige of their glory left.

IV. HENCE THE PSALMIST'S COUNSEL TO SUBMISSION. Verses 10-12. As before, so here, each line in the strophe contains some new thought and urges some new lesson. We have—

1. *An exhortation to wisdom.* "Be wise, ye kings; be instructed, ye judges." In their conduct they had displayed the greatest folly, and evinced the profoundest ignorance. For a man—ay, for a prince, a judge, a king, one in the highest authority among men, one who sits upon a throne and sways a sceptre, to lift his arm against the Anointed One of God, is the *very* extreme of folly; and therefore, the psalmist says to them, "Be wise," that is, "cease your vain and foolish opposition, and listen to the voice of one who would instruct you." Happily for us, this exhortation is not too late.

2. *An exhortation to submission.* "Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling." The nations had said, "Let us break their bonds asunder," &c.; here they are urged to submit to those bonds, and to acknowledge the Messiah as their King and Lord. What means the second clause, "Rejoice with trembling?" Some render it, Shake with trembling; but the word means exult; and the meaning is, "Be glad that you have a King so gracious, who has not already destroyed you utterly; but do it with fear, lest you should again offend Him, and bring upon you His severest wrath and displeasure." "*Rejoice with trembling.*" It is a motto for kings and princes, for statesmen and legislators, for ministers and teachers; and happy will they be who act on the advice.

3. *An exhortation to the profoundest homage.* "Kiss the Son," &c. The kiss was the sign, (1) Of reconciliation and peace, (2) Of homage and worship. 1 Kings xix. 18; Hos. xiii. 2.

Of esteem and love. Can. i. 2. But the kiss must be sincere, not that of the traitor. Luke xxii. 47, 48. And this exhortation is enforced by the words, "Lest He be angry," &c. Some interpret this, "Lest Jehovah be angry;" but even the Son may be angry, and we read elsewhere of the wrath of the Lamb. Rev. vi. 16. Kindness may be grieved, love may be incensed; and that *soon* as this word means; and who can bear that—the wrath of the Lamb? But the Psalm closes with another note: "Blessed are all they that put their trust, or find refuge, in Him." Compare Ps. cxviii. 9 and cxlii. 3. Reader, see that this blessedness is yours.



The Fear of the Lord and its Privileges.

A SERMON BY THE REV. JOSHUA MASON (OF NOTTINGHAM).

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant."—Ps. xxv. 14.

RELIGION may be contemplated under two main aspects—the uniting us to God and giving us fellowship with Him, and the uniting men to each other in a pure, unfailing, passionate charity. In a word, true religion can enable us to interpret, appropriate, feel, and fulfil what is taught in the law of the two tables, written with the finger of God. I had best quote St. Paul's words: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. viii. 3, 4. Of the two aspects of religion to which I have referred, the text deals chiefly with the former—"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant."

The subject on which I shall address you is, The fear of the Lord, with its privileges and its blessings. There are three points we shall take up. 1. The fear of God. 2. Intimacy with God. 3. The manifestations of God.

I. THE FEAR OF GOD. "Them that fear Him."

1. *This is an intelligent fear.* It is said that while earth has many languages, there is but one in heaven. Whether the word "fear" is found in the heavenly language or not, there must be a corresponding word in it. St. John heard the harpers on the sea of glass singing, "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord,

and glorify Thy name?" The mood of the loftiest creature with regard to God is as reverential as it is cheerful, and therefore fear is as necessary as love. We call the "fear" of which the text speaks intelligent, as opposed to that which is blind and bewildering. It is counted by the wise man as the choicest treasure. "Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith." Prov. xv. 16. It is nurtured by the contemplation of God in His nature, attributes, relations, works, and words, as He has been pleased to reveal Himself in creation and providence, but especially in the Bible, "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts Himself, and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread." Is. viii. 13. It is as far from horror and despondency as it is from superstition and presumption. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A good understanding have all they that do His commandments." Ps. cxi. 10.

2. *This is a gracious fear.* By this we mean, not only that it is not a fear which springs from the natural operations of our own minds, but that it is not such a fear as comes of the retributive laws which are at work in the universe. No; we call that not gracious, but slavish fear—the "fear" which "hath torment." David has said, "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart that there is no fear of God before his eyes." Adam was in fear when he hid himself behind the trees of the garden. Cain was in fear when he said, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Pilate was afraid in the presence of the spotless innocence and awful silence of Jesus. Felix even trembled under Paul's preaching. All this was tormenting fear. Gracious fear is that which God gives to the penitent sinner—gives to the pardoned and adopted child. A fear, therefore, which the Lord gives, not in wrath, but in mercy, gives through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. We cannot do better than quote the Lord's words to His ancient people, as recorded in the thirty-second chapter of Jeremiah, "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me."

3. *This fear is habitual.* The command of the Almighty, through the lips of the second great leader of the Hebrew people, was this: "Fear the Lord your God for ever." Josh. iv. 24. The advice of the wise man to his son is, "Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long." Prov. xxiii. 17. It is therefore manifest that this fear must operate in matters of everyday life. Indeed, St. Paul puts this thought strongly: "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the

flesh, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart fearing God." Col. iii. 22. It is, therefore, not the fear which may seize a man when danger threatens and death seems near, but which passes away when safety is reached and life is given back. From all such fear there are promises of deliverance. "The Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow and from thy fear." Is. xiv. 3. How rich in blessing are the following words, addressed to those who habitually fear God: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them." Ps. ciii. 13-18.

4. I will add that this is a *growing fear*. That this fear must grow is manifest, when we reflect upon its characteristics, which have been considered already—namely, that it is an intelligent, gracious, and also an habitual fear. This fear-growth is a necessary issue of the regenerate soul's capacity and tendency to expand. It "never continueth in one stay." Let us not forget that God is the object of this fear, and that it consists of grateful admiration, reverence, and awe of Him. As God continues to manifest Himself more and more to the immortal soul which He has made and saved, that soul must increase in the fear of Him. Borne away to heaven, we see this fear shown in the veiled faces of the seraphim, and in the prostrate elders, with their crowns cast before the throne. To all the lovers of God in Christ, who are led by His Spirit, and are students of His Word, I would say, in Paul's language, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." 2 Cor. vii. 1.

II. INTIMACY WITH GOD.

1. The text affirms that "the *secret* of the Lord is with them that fear Him." Some explanation of the word rendered "secret" may not be without instruction and interest to you. The word sometimes means a couch, in allusion to the eastern custom of reclining at meals. Then, in the next place, the word means, to converse familiarly together as friends usually do over meals. A third sense which arises out of the second is suggested by the textual rendering, "secret." The sense has been well given by Jehn Mason Good as "secret intercourse, privy counsel, confidential communication, communion." It may therefore be

taken as the Lord's favour; and this seems to be its meaning, where Job says, "Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when the candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle, when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me." Job xxix. 2-5. Let us take the meaning of our text to be in the second part of it just what we have named it—intimacy with God.

2. This *intimacy* comes with A SOUND CONVERSION, and only with this.

The descriptions of our natural state in the Bible make us appear on anything but friendly terms with God. And if we know ourselves aright, we shall feel that such descriptions are not at all overdrawn, but literally true. We are children of a fallen race—in guilt and under condemnation. "There is no health in us;" and instead of intimacy, unconverted people are represented as "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Eph. iv. 18. Before intimacy with God can be possessed and enjoyed, our sins, for Christ's sake, must all be forgiven. We must prove by a blessed experience the truth and power of St. Paul's words, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Eph. ii. Only when we turn away from our sins by sincere repentance, and come by faith to the Saviour of sinners, and God pardons all our sins, does God entrust to us the "secret" of His "favour which is better than life." But it may be best for us to dwell a moment on what is suggested by the literal meaning of the word which is rendered "secret" in the text. The Bible represents us as so many prodigals, far away from father and home, wandering, hungry, and naked, worn and wasted with a loathsome and an incurable disease. But the good Book also tells us of a Physician who can heal us, and waits to do so free of charge. It tells of garments of salvation and white robes of righteousness bought with Christ's blood and wrought by Christ's hands, and that these are also free. Yea, it tells us of a feast of fat things spread out, of luscious wine, of fresh and creamy milk, and of messengers sent away with general and pressing invitation—"Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

At the Supper in the upper room, only one of the disciples was permitted to lean on the bosom of Jesus, but at this feast all the guests may find a place there—the bosom of the Almighty and Omnipresent Jesus is large enough for you all.

3. This intimacy is *kept up by a life of faith*. In the Scrip-

tures, Christ is called "precious"; His blood is said to be "precious;" the promises are called "precious." Of the trial of faith we read that it is "precious;" and in 2 Peter i. 1, we read that faith is "precious"—"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us."

There are expressions full of wonder meeting us in the New Testament—expressions which tell of the believer being in Christ, and of Christ being in the believer. The believer is in Christ as the branch is in the vine, as the member is in the body. From Christ crucified, risen, ascended, glorified, as from an inexhaustless fountain, streams come in which the believer bathes and lives. And the believer in soul and body is the temple in which Christ lives. Hence the prayer of St. Paul, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Eph. iii. 17. And further, the same apostle says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. ii. 20. This faith looks about for Christ on earth in all things, and looks above for Him—"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Under its inspiration the bride in the Canticles exclaims, "Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thy eyes." Oh, what must a full gaze on Jesus be! Faith finds in Christ the kernel of the Gospel, the pearl of its ring, the treasure of its mine, the jewel of its casket. If clouds and darkness intercept the skies, and waves of sorrow roll, faith sings on a minor key—

"Dark and cheerless is the morn
Unaccompanied by Thee;
Joyless is the day's return,
Till Thy mercy's beams I see." . . .

But faith does not stop there. No, no! it cries aloud—

"Visit, then, this soul of mine,
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
Fill me, Radiancy Divine,
Scatter all my unbelief;
More and more Thyself display,
Shining to the perfect day."

Yea, and under the mighty and blessed inspiration of this faith, the Christian sings—

"Give me the enlarged desire,
And open, Lord, my soul,
Thy own fulness to require,
And comprehend the whole.
Stretch my faith's capacity
Wider and yet wider still;

Then, with all that is in Thee,
My soul for ever fill."

4. This *intimacy* with God may be *forfeited*. It may be so partially, as in the case of Peter, when he denied his Master. It may be so completely, as in the case of Judas, the betrayer of Jesus, who hanged himself and went to his own place. Already have we spoken to you of faith as the root-grace from which all other graces spring. Let faith die, and all other graces must die with it. St. Paul uses this figure, "Holding faith and a good conscience; which some, having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck" (1 Tim. i. 19); and, as a consequence, all the precious cargo of graces has gone down. The Great Teacher has another figure. "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." John xv. 6. Let us then remember the words of St. Paul, "By faith ye stand;" and his other words also, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." And let us pray the prayer which Jesus taught—"Lord, increase our faith." He taught this prayer by the very necessities in which He involved His disciples, and by His inspiring Spirit. Calling up the hour of our espousal to Christ; refreshing our memories with seasons of blessed union and communion with Him; and feeling our own frailty, and musing on the sad and numerous instances we have known of those who have ceased to follow Jesus, let us sing, with a chastened, solemn soul—

"Lest this my fearful case should be,
Each moment knit my soul to Thee;
And lead me to the mount above,
Through the low vale of humble love."

III. THE MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD.

1. Here a passing reference should be made to what is meant by the word "*covenant*." In discussing the teaching of the passage, we have referred to the festive idea in the term "secret." Now we take this word "*covenant*" to have been derived from a verb, which amongst other things signifies, to eat together; and among the eastern people to this day covenants are made in connection with a meal, and indeed the meal itself is sometimes a covenant. In some instances a covenant means the arrangement and disposition of property. I need not argue that this idea enters largely into the meaning of the word as it is used by Jesus Christ and by His inspired apostles. We include this in the term we give to the word here also. The covenant of grace we believe is meant. If you ask me what property He has to bestow, I answer, Grace and glory, nothing less than that, and there cannot be anything greater than that. "The Lord will

give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Ps. lxxxiv. 11. It is the covenant of God. "His covenant," who is sovereign, all-sufficient, immutable—"the everlasting covenant." "And He will show them His covenant."

2. *Many things* are comprehended in this promise. (1.) There is the *Deed* in which this covenant is written—the Bible. God shows to them who fear Him, and who commune with Him, not only that the Bible was written under His unerring inspiration, but that He has preserved it to us in all its essentialness until now. Nor does He show this only, but He shows to His people the hidden meaning of His word; and under His Spirit's teaching the holy books become spirit and life. Take care, brethren, in this age of venture and rashness, lest to you this Deed be mutilated, and rendered null and void. (2.) God will show to you *the blessings* of the covenant, and this means not only that you shall see them, but that they shall be yours—the blessings of the upper and of the nether springs. Jesus said to His disciples, "I appoint unto you a kingdom." Luke xxii. 29. Now St. Paul says, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Rom. xiv. 17. And the same apostle, writing to the Ephesians, breaks forth into thanksgiving, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ." Eph. i. 3. Blessings having their source in heaven, and are received by us, saving and enriching us; and then tending towards heaven in order to their perfect consummation. The worth of these blessings is incalculable, and their number is innumerable. Justification, the Spirit's witness, regeneration, sanctification, communion with God, all-sufficient grace. In Christ all fulness dwells—"And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Blessed be His name, His grace is not only repletive, but diffusive; not only plentiful, but bountiful. (3.) In these words, "And He will show them His covenant," we may understand *the rewards* of those who fear the Lord, and who are in intimacy with Him. Listen to the prayer of Jesus, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." Go to the mount of vision, and stand beside the beloved disciple. Before you is the redeemed multitude that no one can number, clad in white robes, and bearing palms; they sing of salvation with a loud voice to God and the Lamb. And now the crowned elder comes, and tells us wherefore they are, and whence they come. Yes, out of great tribulation, and each robe they wear has been "washed and made white in the blood

of the Lamb." "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters," and "He will show them His covenant" then, "and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," and in all these things God manifests Himself. In creation He manifests Himself. Every flower is adorned with His beauty. Suns and stars shine with His light. Thunders and zephyrs are the echoes of His voice. The singing birds discourse His music, and their voices have all been attuned by Him. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech; and night unto night sheweth knowledge." If God manifests Himself in creation and providence, He does so in other ways, and more fully in redemption.

"Part of Thy name divinely stands
On all Thy creatures writ;
They show the labour of Thy hands,
Or impress of Thy feet.

"But when we view Thy strange design
To save rebellious worms,
Where vengeance and compassion join
In their divinest forms;

"Here the whole Deity is known,
Nor dares a creature guess
Which of the glories brightest shone,
The justice or the grace."

Thus much on—The fear of God, the intimacy with God, and the manifestations of God.

THE CONCLUSION.—*First.* I would warn you. I fear that some present are living not only without the love of God in your hearts, but without any influential fear of Him before your eyes. Oh, heedless sinner, hear the word of the Lord, "Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." Job xxxvi. 18. Do hear His word, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith thee Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. i. 18.

Secondly. I would exhort you. And here I turn to those who have religion. Take the fear of the Lord with you everywhere. Not only into the sanctuary with its services, but into your homes with your joys and sorrows—yea, take this fear with you into the business of everyday life. And then, if your ways

please the Lord, He will make, as He has promised, "even your enemies to be at peace with you," and you shall prove it true—"All things work together for good."

Lastly. I would encourage you. Let the sinner not give up all for lost. No, there is mercy with God that He may be feared. Let the penitent soul be comforted. "He delighteth in mercy." Let the believer know assuredly that God waits to tell you many secrets yet—waits to bestow exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think.

Materials for Sermons.

V.—THE GOSPEL COMMISSION.

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."—LUKE xxiv. 47.

OUR Lord Jesus being risen from the dead, the method He uses to demonstrate to His disciples the certainty of so great a miracle is very complete. He begins with their senses, showing Himself to them, and offering to be touched and handled. Verse 39. "For a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." He next addresses their faith, by arguments from Scripture, proving that "those things must needs be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Him." Verse 44. And lastly, completes the conviction, and furnishes them to make the best use of it, by opening their "understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures, that thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name, beginning at Jerusalem."

From which words we may observe—

I. THAT REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS ARE BOTH THE FRUITS OF CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION; since it behoved Christ thus to suffer and rise, that they might be preached. Had He not died and rose again, there would have been no forgiveness. There might indeed have been a kind of repentance, such as in hell, or such as that of Judas, which sent him thither; a repentance unto death and despair: but repentance unto life, and the remission of sin, are the blessed fruits that grow out of the

accursed tree, and do rise with our Lord Jesus out of the same grave : " It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again," that is the ground of that following challenge, " Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? "

II. REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS GO TOGETHER, BOTH IN THE COMMISSION AND IN THE NATURE OF THE THING. To preach repentance is as truly the design and business of the Gospel commission, as to preach remission of sins. Consequently, if we preach the nature of repentance, the motives to it, the necessity of it, it is all Gospel ; it is what the law knew nothing of, made no allowance for, but this makes one-half of the Gospel commission.

Repentance is a revolted sinner's returning back from sin and Satan, from the world and self, to God, his original happiness : as to his sovereign Lord, to be obeyed ; and his best portion, to be enjoyed ; depending for acceptance on the recommendation of the Mediator. For this end Christ came into the world, with this He began His ministry, " Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." With this message were the apostles and ministers sent into all nations, and it would be very strange indeed, if Christ, His apostles, His first ministers, and His own commission, too, should be all of them only in a legal design, and governed by a legal spirit.

III. THE GOSPEL COMMISSION AND OFFER IS WITHOUT EXCEPTION OF NATION OR PERSONS : " That repentance and remission of sins may be preached unto all nations." Inpenitence and unbelief make the only exceptions ; they do indeed effectually keep our names out of the book of life, the list and characters of those whom the Gospel appoints to salvation. It is no imputation upon God that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Jesus Christ is not as universal as the light of the sun ; and that the Book of Scripture is not read wherever the book of nature lies open. " Their line is gone throughout all the world ; " and wherever one line of nature's law is writ, it might have been interlined with Gospel discoveries, if it had not been their own fault, for the commission was as wide as possible, but they would not suffer it to run ; and though it was commissioned into all nations, those very nations absolutely refused it, and cannot justly tax Providence for the want of that which they would never receive.

IV. These great blessings of repentance and remission of sins are commanded TO BE OFFERED IN THE FIRST PLACE TO SOME OF THE VILEST OF SINNERS—"Beginning at Jerusalem." It is very affecting that the first offers of grace should be made to those who of all people in the world had done it the most despite! That the heavenly gift should be tendered to those first, who least deserved it; not that any can deserve it at all, for then it were not grace; but they of all people had most deserved the contrary! That they who had abused Christ to a degree beyond all description, should yet lie uppermost in His care, and stand foremost in His pity, and find so much mercy from One, to whom they showed none at all!

One would rather have expected the apostles should have received another kind of charge; and that Christ should have said, "Let repentance and remission of sins be preached, but carry it not to Jerusalem, that wicked city, that has been the slaughter-house of My prophets, whom I have often sent. After them I sent John the Baptist, a burning and a shining light; him they killed in prison. Last of all, I Myself, the Son, came also; and Me, with wicked hands, they have crucified and slain. They may do the same by you; the disciple is not like to be better treated than his Lord. Let not the Gospel enter those gates, through which they led Me, its Author, to crucifixion. I have been preaching there Myself these three years; I have mingled My tears with My sermons; I have supported My pretensions and character from the Scriptures of Moses and the prophets; I have confirmed them by Divine miracles, and sealed all with My blood, yet they would not give ear. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! all that I have left for thee now is what I have before dropped over thee—viz., a compassionate tear and wish, "that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belonged to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes!" And so let them remain; for I charge you, My apostles, to preach repentance and remission of sins to all other nations, but come not near the wicked city."

But God's thoughts are not as ours, neither are His ways as our ways; but as far as the heavens are above the earth, so are His thoughts and ways above ours. Our way is to make the chief offenders examples of justice, to avenge ourselves upon *those who have done us personal injury and wrong*; but Christ

chooses out these to make examples of mercy, and commands *the first offer* of eternal life to be made to them, and all the world are to wait till they have had the first refusal of the Gospel salvation.

As if our Lord had said, It is true, My sufferings are an universal remedy, and I have given My life a ransom for all, that the Gentiles afar off might be brought nigh, and all the ends of the earth might see the salvation of God, and therefore, go into all nations, and offer this salvation as you go; but, lest the poor house of Israel should think themselves abandoned to despair, the seed of Abraham, Mine ancient friend; as cruel and unkind as they have been, go make them the first offer of grace, let them have the first refusal of Gospel mercy. Let them that struck the rock drink first of its refreshing streams; and they that drew my blood be welcome to its healing virtue.

Tell them that as I was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, so if they will be gathered, I will be their Shepherd still. Though they despised My tears which I shed over them, and imprecated My blood to be upon them, tell them it was for there sakes I shed both; that by My tears I might soften their hearts towards God, and by My blood I might reconcile them unto God.

Tell them I *live*, and because I am alive again, My death shall not be their damnation; nor is My murder an unpardonable crime, for My blood cleanseth from all sin. Tell them you have seen the prints of the nails upon My hands and feet, and the wounds of the spear in My side, and that those marks of their cruelty are so far from giving Me vindictive thoughts, that every wound they have given Me speaks in their behalf, pleads with the Father for remission of their sins, and enables Me to bestow it; and by those sufferings which they may be ready to think have exasperated Me against them, by those very wounds, court and persuade them to receive the salvation they have procured.

Nay, if you meet that poor wretch that thrust the spear into My side, tell him there is another way, a better way, of coming at My heart, even My heart's love, if he will repent, "and look upon Him whom he pierced, and mourn." I will cherish him in that very bosom he has wounded; he shall find the blood he shed an ample atonement for the sin of shedding it. And tell him from Me, he will put Me to more pain and displeasure by refusa-

ing this offer of My blood, than when he first drew it forth. In short. Though they have gainsaid My doctrine, blasphemed My Divinity, and abused and tormented My person, taken away My life, and what is next valuable to every honest man, endeavoured to murder My reputation, too, by making Me an impostor, and imputing My miracles to a combination with Beelzebub; however, go to Jerusalem, and by beginning there, show them such a miracle of goodness and grace that they themselves must confess too good for the devil to have any hand in, too Godlike for him to be assisting in; that may convince them of their sin, and, at the same time, that nothing can be greater than their sin except this mercy and grace of Mine, which "where their sin has abounded, does thus much more abound," beginning at Jerusalem.

DR. GROSVENOR.

VI.—TRUE RELIGION A DIVINE WORK.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."—PHIL. i. 6.

DIVINE agency and human freedom in the work of personal religion cannot reasonably be doubted. Scripture plainly unites them; and what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. In the next chapter (ii. 12, 13), the apostle thus speaks of the union of the Divine and human in individual salvation, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." The glory of salvation in its commencement, progress, and termination is attributed to God, yet we are exhorted to "enter in at the strait gate," &c.; to "run the race set before us;" to "fight the good fight of faith, that we may lay hold on eternal life."

To look at religion *exclusively* as a work of God in us, is to make man a mere passive instrument, without having power to do those things which God has enjoined him to do. On the other hand, to make religion the work of man *exclusively*, independent of Divine co-operation, we go on the opposite extreme. It would be to make religion a thing of insignificance. It would be building on the sand, and raising a fabric at great expense, eventually to fall upon its builder, and crush him to powder.

In the text, personal religion is brought before us as the work of God, and man is recognised as the subject of it. So that we

shall from these words consider personal religion in the Divine aspect of it.

I. Personal religion is here spoken of as **A WORK**. It is something done; something received; something felt; something seen.

II. It is a **DIVINE WORK**. It is of God in the conception; in the revelation; in the application. It has God's nature and impress. It is of and by His Holy Spirit. No religion except a Divine would meet the claims and necessities of human souls.

III. It is a **SPIRITUAL AND INTERNAL WORK**. "He which hath begun a good work **IN** you." Its subject is the inner man—the spirit. Hence it is spiritual illumination, spiritual conviction, spiritual renewal, spiritual comfort, spiritual guidance, &c. It is being born of the Spirit, living in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, being led of the Spirit, &c., &c.

IV. It is a **GOOD WORK**. What we have already said shows this. In itself it contains the most excellent principles, precepts, doctrines. It is wisdom, light, understanding, purity. The Scriptures use the choicest terms and phrases to denote its intrinsic excellence. It is good *in its experience*; it is good *in its practical uses*.

V. It is a **PROGRESSIVE WORK**. It has a beginning. "He which hath *begun*." It is as the growth of corn, as the growth of a child, as the rising and spread of daylight, as the running river, as the racer on his course, as the building in its erection, &c.

VI. **THE COMPLETION OF THIS WORK**. "Being confident that He which hath begun it," &c. Here the apostle assumes that the subjects of it would not resist or oppose the Divine operation, and with this assumption, he is confident in affirming that God would not begin without completing. This confidence or assurance may rest—1. On the Divine character. 2. On the Divine promises. 3. On the Divine agencies and means. 4. On the Divine will. What can prevent the completion of His work apart from the personal resistance of the subject himself? Sin, Satan, the world,—nothing is too hard for Him to subdue and remove.

To have this work performed until the day of Christ, is to have it finished by the time He shall come and take us to Himself; so

that then nothing shall be left to be done; but we shall be perfect, entire, and nothing wanting; and so, without delay, He shall take us to Himself, so that where He is there shall we be also.

Conclusion.—1. Those of you in whom this good work is begun, give God thanks for His grace in beginning it.

2. Do not infer that you have nothing to do, and the work will go on, however you may live. This is Antinomianism, against which you are earnestly warned in God's word.

3. Work out your own salvation, and you may be confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun *His* work in you will finish it.

4. Do not think that this work may be deferred in its completion until Christ come. It is a work to be finished *before* He come; so that then He may find you ready. Death is no Saviour. There is no salvation in the judgment. "*Work while it is day*; the night cometh, when no man can work."

JOSEPH BATE.

Illustrations, &c.

BEING CONFIDENT, &c.—This the apostle speaks, not out of any opinion of the election of all the Philippians to eternal life, or of the certainty of their perseverance to the end by virtue of that election; for then, why doth he exhort them to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling?" to "stand fast in the Lord?" and to "retain the word of life, that he might have joy in the day of Christ, that he had not run in vain, or laboured in vain among them?" He speaks this therefore from a judgment of charity, conjecturing, saith Theophylact, from what was past, what they would be for the future; because, saith he, it seems just or fit for me to conceive this good hope of you, by reason of that great affection you retain to me, and your patience in enduring the like afflictions. Now, he that only gives these reasons of his confidence, gives us just reasons to conceive he knew nothing of the necessity of their perseverance by virtue of an absolute election to salvation.—*Whitby*.

INCENTIVE TO PERSEVERANCE.—God left not that great work of the creation in the first or second day thereof, but in six days finished it, to the glory of His name; nor as these in the generation of His creatures, but now also in their regeneration. Whom He loves He loves to the end; and the good work that

He hath begun in any shall be perfected. Having, then, so fair a copy to write by, so good an example to live by, let us so run, that we may obtain; so sail in the sea of this world, that we never give over till we arrive in the desired haven; so to begin, as to be sure to make an end; that it may never be said, to our great and just reproach, "This man began to build, but was not able to finish."

It is the part of a good workman not to leave his work unfinished; a good physician will not forsake his patient when he hath done but half his cure; the husbandman gives not over when he hath sown but some part of his ground; and he that doth but half build a house is but half a carpenter. So should the Christian persevere with God in the work of religion, until the day of Christ.

VII.—THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING AND THE BLOOD OF ABEL.

"And He said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground."—GEN. iv. 10.

"And to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."—HEB. xii. 24.

THIS cry of Abel's blood reminds us of the "how long?" of the martyrs (Rev. vi. 10), and of the injured widow's "avenge me." It was a cry from the ground, where it had been hidden from every eye but God's; a cry to God; a cry which brought down a curse.

The "blood of sprinkling" is first of all the blood which was sprinkled in the tabernacle; which, with all its imperfections, spoke better things than Abel's. But it is especially the blood of the Lamb of God as sprinkled on the conscience in believing. In one aspect, the cry of Christ's blood is the same, for it is that blood that now rests on Israel. Through it the long curse has come upon the nation. But still, this is not the direct and proper meaning or application of the blood. It speaks better things than that of Abel.

I. *It speaks of love, not hatred.* It was to Cain's hatred—a brother's hatred that Abel's blood bore witness. The blood of sprinkling speaks of a Brother's love—the love of Christ, the love of Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. It is truly of love that the blood so loudly and explicitly

speaks. Thus it speaks better things than that of Abel : for it speaks both of a Father's and a Brother's love. "God is love" is its message. Of the love which passeth knowledge it bears witness to us ; love unto death ; love stronger than death.

II. *It speaks of grace, not of wrath.* Because of Abel's blood, God was angry. It was Divine wrath that spoke out in His words to Cain. But it is Divine grace and mercy that speak in the blood of Christ. The blood of sprinkling propitiates God, and draws out grace. It says, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Grace "abounding" over Divine wrath and human sin ; "riches of grace ;" "exceeding riches of grace ;" the "grace of God that bringeth salvation." These are the voices which come from it to us.

III. *It speaks of forgiveness, not condemnation.* The blood said, "Father, forgive them." It was not condemning blood ; he who heard of it and believed God's testimony to its meaning and efficacy, was thereby assured of forgiveness. The blood showed the true basis and the true way of pardon—pardon through the blood-shedding for the blood-shedders themselves—righteous, true, holy, unchangeable, eternal pardon. "No condemnation," nay, justification through the great transaction on the cross.

IV. *It speaks of comfort, not of terror.* Abel's blood was dreadful to all who saw it ; full of terror to the murderer ; alarm to his conscience, remorse to his spirit. Not so with this better blood. Its voice is comfort. It soothes the sinner's terrors. It does not palliate his sin ; yet it so speaks to him concerning it as to let him know that the blood-shedding which brings him in guilty and deserving of a murderer's death, assures him at the same time of the removal of all his fears. It is, indeed, nobler, richer blood, the blood of God, and so, bringing on the shedder more awful guilt ; yet by its propitiatory nature, its expiatory power, it announces with Divine certainty the deliverance from the infinite danger under which they who had shed it had brought themselves.

V. *It speaks of peace come, not peace gone.* The blood of Abel said, Peace is gone ; peace has forsaken the earth ; it has left man, and the families of man. All is now hatred, variance, murder, separation between man and God ; between man and man ; between brother and brother. The blood of Jesus tells that

peace has returned. He is our peace. His blood has brought it back to earth. He has made peace by the blood of His cross. It has come. It has come down from heaven. Heaven and earth are meeting. God and the sinner are being reconciled. There is yet hope for man and man's earth. We need not despair, as if peace had fled away for ever.

VI. *It speaks of the blessing, not of the curse.* Abel's blood spoke wholly of the curse; it brought the curse on Cain, and on the earth. It doubled the curse which Adam's sin had brought to the world. Christ's blood blesses, and curses not. Its voice is the voice of blessing. It means blessing in every drop. It means blessing when first shed; it means blessing still. There is no curse in it, saving to those who reject it. In it is the fullness of eternal blessing, blessing such as the sinner needs; the removal of all curse for soul and body.

VII. *It speaks of nearness, not of distance between man and God.* Reconciliation, friendship, communion, nearness—all these are contained in it. "We who some time were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." No separation, no darkness, no uncertainty of relationship, but re-cemented union, on the basis of a purged conscience and an everlasting righteousness. Every hair's breadth of the distance which sin had produced is for ever swept away. Perpetual nearness! Eternal fellowship! This is our portion, secured to us by the *righteous* removal of all that intervened between us and God, either on God's side or ours.

VIII. *It speaks of the purged, not of the pricked and despairing conscience.* Abel's blood spoke to Cain's conscience; it must have been a perpetual pricking and wounding. Christ's blood speaks of purging, healing, soothing. No more conscience of sins! A conscience purged from dead works to serve the living God! Every wound in it healed; every trouble laid to rest; every shadow resting over it dispelled. Not despair, but hope.

IX. *It speaks of life, not of death.* Abel's blood seemed the seal set to the death of the race. Brother murders brother—what is to be the end of this? But Christ's blood speaks of life; the reversal of the sentence by the payment of the penalty. There was life through the blood and death of the Son of God. Life from the dead is the voice of the blood—life to the slayers of the *Prince of life*. The voice from the cross was one

of life—"I give unto them eternal life." The voice from the tomb was the same—"Quickened together with Christ."

X. *It speaks of restoration, not of expulsion.* It was Abel's blood that made Cain a fugitive and vagabond. Christ's blood brings us back from our wanderings; restores us to Paradise; delivers us from exile; gives us possession of the Paradise of God, the heavenly city, the new heavens and earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. It is the blood of the Son of God that makes us friends, children, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

Let us receive God's testimony to this blood, this better blood, this blood of the everlasting covenant. The reception of this Divine testimony is life, and peace, and holiness.

Be warned against the rejection of this testimony, and trampling on this blood. It is blood which, when sprinkled on the soul, saves; but which, when not sprinkled, condemns. It will sink the rejector to the lowest hell. DR. BONAR.

Synonyms of Terms used in Preaching.

EVENT, ISSUE, CONSEQUENCE.

THE *EVENT* terminates; the *ISSUE* flows out; the *CONSEQUENCE* follows.

The *event* respects great undertakings; the *issue* of particular efforts; the *consequence* respects everything which can produce a *consequence*. Hence we speak of the *event* of a war; the *issue* of a negotiation, and the *consequences* of either. The measures of government are often unjustly praised or blamed according to the *event*; the fate of a nation sometimes hangs on the *issue* of a battle; its conquest is one of the *consequences* which follows the defeat of its armies. We must be prepared for the *event* which is frequently above our control; we must exert ourselves to bring about a favourable *issue*; address and activity will go far towards ensuring success; but if, after all our efforts, we still fail, it is *our duty to submit* with patient resignation to the *consequences*.

GRACE, FAVOUR.

GRACE, in French *grace*, Latin *gratia*, comes from *gratus*, kind, because a *grace* results from kindness independently of the merit of the receiver; but *favour* is that which is granted voluntarily, and without hope of recompence, independently of all obligation.

Grace is never used but in regard to those who have offended and made themselves liable to punishment; *favour* is employed for actual good. An act of *grace* is employed to denote that act of the government by which insolvent debtors are released; but otherwise, the term is in most frequent use among Christians to denote that merciful influence which God asserts over His most unworthy creatures, from the infinite goodness of His Divine nature; it is to this special *grace* that we attribute every good feeling by which we are prevented from committing sin; the term *favour* is employed indiscriminately with regard to man or his Maker; those who are in power have the greatest opportunity of conferring *favours*; but all we receive at the hands of God must be acknowledged as a *favour*. The Divine *grace* is absolutely indispensable for men as sinners; the Divine *favour* is perpetually necessary for men as His creatures, dependent upon Him for everything.

CHASTEN, CHASTISE.

BOTH come through the French *chatier*, from the Latin *castigo*, which is compounded of *castus* and *ago*, to make pure.

Chasten has most regard to the end, *chastise* to the means; the former is an act of God, the latter a human action; God *chastens* His faithful people to correct their evils; parents *chastise* their children to prevent the repetition of faults; afflictions are the means which He adopts for *chastening* those whom He wishes to make more obedient to His will; stripes are the means by which offenders are *chastised*.

GOD ALL IN ALL.—He who fills with good things the desire of the soul, He Himself will be to the reason the fulness of light, to the will the abundance of peace, to the memory the unbroken smoothness of eternity.—*Bernard*.

Preacher's Counsellor.

THE POWER OF ELOQUENCE.

IT is true that in many respects the moderns excel the ancients, but not in oratory or eloquence ; and this is the reason why we now very seldom hear of any *very great effects* produced by modern oratory, but we read of many such instances in *ancient times*. Thus, *Hegesias*, a Cyrenean orator, once delivered his sentiments with such eloquence on the miseries of human life and the contempt that should be had for death, that many of his audience put themselves to death, and therefore King Ptolomæus was obliged to forbid him from making any more orations on that subject. Cicero undertook to plead the cause of Ligurius, whom Cæsar hated because he had rebelled against him, and was *determined* to put him to death. At first Cæsar absolutely refused to hear Cicero's defence of Ligurius ; at last, however, he consented, yet *resolved* not to be moved on his behalf, and was prepared to refute Cicero by letters and memorials against Ligurius, which he held in his hand ; but before the great Roman orator had finished his speech, such was the effect of his eloquence, that Cæsar *insensibly* let fall the papers out of his hands, his colour and resolution forsook him, and he not only pardoned Ligurius, but made him one of his principal friends. Demosthenes also produced similar effects, and especially when he delivered the celebrated oration *against King Philip*. Now, imagine to yourselves this Grecian orator addressing perhaps the most illustrious assembly in the world upon a point whereon the fate of a *great nation* depended. How awful such a meeting ! how vast the subject ! And yet, by the power of his eloquence, the augustness of the assembly is lost in the dignity of the orator, and the importance of the subject for awhile superseded by the admiration of his talents. With what strength of argument, with what powers of the fancy, with what emotions of the heart, did he captivate the reason, the imagination, and the passions ! Not a faculty that he possessed was then unemployed ; all his internal powers were at work, all his external testify their energy ; within, the memory, the fancy, the judgment, the passions were all busy ; *without, every muscle, every nerve, was exerted, and not a limb*

or a feature but spoke. Notwithstanding the diversity of minds in such a multitude by the lightning of the eloquence of Demosthenes, they are melted into *one mass*; the whole assembly, actuated in one and the same way, became as it were but one man, and had but one voice; the universal cry was, *Let us march against Philip, let us fight for our liberties, let us conquer or die.*—*Sheridan.*

As the tongue speaks to the *ear*, so does action speak to the *eye*; both of them, properly used and united, form a complete orator.—*Lord Bacon.*

Good reading is half a comment, and good speaking is half an argument.—*Bp. Spratt.*

LEARN to speak slow, all other graces
Will follow in their proper places.

The force of truth and weighty words
Will outdo what is done by swords.

An orator, with energy of thought, controls
And steals with modest violence our souls,
His gentle eloquence like balm distils,
And the sooth'd heart with secret pleasure fills;
The copious accents fall with easy art,
Melting they fall, and sink into the heart.

—*Pope.*

Pulpit Illustrations.

THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIMAGE.

IF men have been termed pilgrims, and life a journey, then we may add that the Christian pilgrimage far surpasses all others the following important particulars:—In the goodness of the road; in the beauty of the prospects; in the excellence of the company; and in the vast superiority of the accommodation provided for the Christian traveller when he has finished his course.—*Colton.*

JOHN xiv. 6.—THE WAY TO THE FATHER.

DURING one of the travels of Queen Victoria, a little boy, like many others who have never seen a queen, was desirous of beholding *so distinguished* a personage, wondering if she was

like other people. To accomplish this desire, he determined that he would go direct to the castle where she was residing, and ask to see her. To his mortification, however, he was stopped at the gate by the sentry, who demanded what he wanted. "I want to see the Queen," he replied. The soldier laughed at the boy, and with the butt end of his musket pushed him away, and told him to be off immediately, or he would shoot him. With a sorrowful heart the boy turned to go away, and gave vent to his grief in tears. He had not gone far when he was met by the Prince of Wales, who kindly inquired why he was crying. "I want to see the Queen," replied the boy, "and that soldier won't let me." "Won't he?" said the Prince; "then come along with me, and I'll take you to the Queen." He accordingly took him by the hand, and condescendingly led him towards the castle. On passing the sentinel, he as usual presented arms to the Prince, and the boy became terrified, and ran away, fearing that the soldier was going to shoot him. The Prince, however, soon quieted his fears, and led him past the gates into the presence of her Majesty. The Queen, with considerable surprise, inquired of her son whom he had got there; and upon being informed what had taken place, she laughed heartily, spoke kindly to her little visitor, and to his great delight dismissed him with a piece of money.

How beautifully does this illustrate the way of access to the Majesty of heaven! God is surrounded by His guards of holiness and justice, and we, being sinful and polluted creatures, cannot approach Him in our own name; but Jesus our Mediator, God's well-beloved Son, takes us by the hand, and having free access to the great Monarch of the skies, presents us before the presence of His glory with joy. Nor do we ever retire from that presence without receiving some substantial tokens of God's kindness and love.

MATT. vii. 2.—RECEIVED AGAIN AS GIVEN.

DURING a time of great dearth, a poor beggar-woman, miserably clad, but very clean, went through a village asking alms. From some doors she was driven away with harsh words, from others she received a few dried crusts, or other refuse too mouldy and decayed to be eaten by the family. One poor labourer, however, noticing her destitution, invited her into his house, made her sit by the stove, and his wife cut off a liberal slice from a fresh-baked loaf.

The poor old woman enjoyed the warmth and food, and with many thanks went on her way. The following day all *the villagers were* invited up to dine at the castle. As they

entered the dining-room they were astonished to observe that on the great table were many dishes, with here and there bits of mouldy bread, raw turnips, and a handful of bran—nothing more. On a small table at the head of the hall was spread an array of all sorts of nice things.

The lady of the castle, stepping forward, welcomed her guests, and then said: "I was the disguised beggar-woman who yesterday passed through the village, and I was anxious to know how, in these hard times, the poor fared, and thus put your benevolence to the proof. Of all, these two poor people alone shared with me their best. They will now eat with me, and I shall settle on them a yearly sum. The rest of you are welcome to take back again what you gave me, and which you will find on those plates, and remember, also, that as we sow on earth, so we reap in heaven."

THE BEST TIME.

ONE day a lady was teaching a class of little girls in a Sunday School.

"My dear children," she said, "how soon may we give our hearts to God, and become Christians?"

They didn't answer at first. Then she spoke to them one by one. Turning to the oldest scholar in the class, she asked:—

"What do you say, Mary?"

"When we are thirteen."

"What do you say, Jane?"

"When we are ten."

"What do you say, Susan?"

"When we are six."

At last she came to little Lillie, the youngest scholar in the class.

"Well, Lillie," she said, "and how soon do you think we may give our hearts to God?"

"Just as soon as we feel that we are sinners, and know who God is, and that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," said Lillie.

LOOKING AT THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

HE who gazes long at the sun becomes unsusceptible of impressions from inferior luminaries; and he who looks much at the Sun of Righteousness will be little affected by any alluring object which the world can exhibit.—*Dr. Payson.*

ISAIAH xlix. 2.—A POLISHED SHAFT.

THE shaft here referred to was either pointed with, or made entirely of, iron; and was, consequently, polished before it was laid in the quiver, preparatory to the battle. An arrow seems to denote an eloquent speaker, and it must be acknowledged that this is an emblem full of propriety, for the shafts of an expert man fly with celerity and hit the object with certainty. Words, when spoken in due season, sometimes strike through the hearts of the hearers, and stick fast in the memory like so many barbed arrows. Aristotle says rhetoric consists not in saying sublime, ingenious, or recondite things; but in hitting the hearts or understandings of the auditory. This remark is confirmed by the experience of every day. For this purpose there are no words like those of Holy Scripture; none that come so directly home to the feelings, or plead so forcibly to the judgment. They are polished shafts, and the Bible is a quiver full of them.—*Rays from the East.*

THE EVENING OF LIFE.

THE stream is calmest when it nears the tide,
And flowers are sweetest at the eventide,
And birds most musical at close of day,
And saints divinest when they pass away.

Morning is lovely, but a holier charm
Lies folded close in Evening's robe of balm;
And weary man must ever love her best,
For Morning calls to toil, but night to rest.

She comes from heaven, and on her wings doth bear
A holy fragrance, like the breath of prayer;
Footsteps of angels follow in her trace,
To shut the weary eyes of day in peace.

All things are hushed before her, as she throws
O'er earth and sky her mantle of repose;
There is a calm, a beauty, and a power
That Morning knows not, in the Evening hour.

"Until the Evening" we must weep and toil,
Plough life's stern furrow, dig the weary soil,
Tread with sad feet our rough and thorny way,
And bear the heat and burden of the day.

Oh! when our sun is setting, may we glide,
Like summer Evening, down the golden tide;
And leave behind us, as we pass away,
Sweet starry twilight round our sleeping clay.



THE LAY PREACHER.

The Salvation Preacher.

WHY distinguish between preachers? For the same reason that other persons are distinguished—they *differ*. There is the *literary* preacher, the *oratorical* preacher, the *logical* preacher, the *fashionable* preacher, the *times* preacher, the *man-fearing* preacher, the *man-pleasing* preacher, the *sensational* preacher, the *doctrinal* preacher, the *controversial* preacher, the *bigoted* preacher, the *self-opinionated* preacher, the *denominational* preacher; and besides these, many more. Their name is legion. The *salvation* preacher is to be distinguished from all these. He is one who, while there may be in his preaching logic, oratory, doctrine, and some other things that are found in other preachers, does not make one or all these prominent. *Salvation* is the chief characteristic of his preaching; therefore, he is appropriately called by that name.

He preaches man's ruin through sin, and his restoration by repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. In a word, whatever his doctrine, logic, rhetoric, or language, his *aim* is the salvation of them

that hear him. He may sometimes be open to criticisms by the wise in their own eyes. He may seem extravagant in some of his views and manners. He may incur the censure of the cool-headed and frozen-hearted, of the stiff formalist and the let-alone-until-God-calls Calvinist. But these do not touch his motive or his aim; nor do they in any way imply that he is deserving of their censures. In taking the opinions respecting another, we must always consider the persons whence they come.

However, we would have it borne in mind that a salvation preacher is one under the influences and operations of the Spirit of Jesus. It is He who brings all things belonging to the preacher—mental, moral, spiritual, physical, circumstantial—into harmonious working for the accomplishment of the end contemplated.

The salvation preacher prays, thinks, reads, travels, preaches, and in fact, does all things in relation to his preaching, that he might save some. His language and feeling are those of Wesley—

“I would the precious time redeem,
And longer live for this alone,
To spend, and to be spent, for them
Who have not yet my Saviour known;
Fully on these my mission prove,
And only breathe, to breathe Thy love.

My talents, gifts, and graces, Lord,
Into Thy blessed hands receive;
And let me live to preach Thy word;
And let me to Thy glory live;
My every sacred moment spend
In publishing the Sinner's Friend.

Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart
With boundless charity divine!
So shall I all my strength exert,
And love them with a zeal like Thine;
And lead them to Thy open side,
The sheep for whom their Shepherd died.”

The salvation preacher is greatly needed. Learning is all well in its place, but will not do for salvation. And so of many other things. Men and women by the millions are wandering in darkness; are sinking in depravity; are being hurried away to destruction. Their cries come as the piteous sounds of ocean's winds in a winter's storm, "What must we do to be *saved*?" Away, away, to the rescue, ye preachers of the Gospel! Ye have the message; on you, if upon any, devolves the work. Make haste! They are going by the thousands daily! Is there time to be *learned* in your answer? Time to be *fashionable*? Time to be rhetorical? Time to be self-complacent? Better these be lost a thousand times over than saved at the expense of invaluable souls. Careless souls, itching-ear souls, fantastical souls, souls which rise no higher in consciousness than earth, may be satisfied with these; but souls sinking into ruin which they *see*, are crying out for *salvation*. They want the word at once, simple, direct, earnest. They want to be plucked out of the fire now, this instant.

The salvation preacher is the only preacher that is worthy the name of *preacher of the Gospel*. There is none other recognised in the court of the kingdom of Christ—none other recognised in the commission of the Great King—none other that are successful in the great business of reconciling men to God. Other preachers may be accepted of men—may rank high in the opinion of the wise of this world—may be first in position, in salary, in emolument; but so far as Christ and usefulness go, they may, perhaps, as well be in a hall of legislation, or in a chair of professorship, or engaged in scholastic training in a country academy.

The salvation preacher is the only one that is in the true apostolic succession. What gives a man a place in this succession? "Ordination by episcopal hands,"

says one. Alas, alas! if this is so. Nay, my friend, nay! *Preaching the Gospel* brings a man into this succession. What is the Gospel? Salvation. He who preaches salvation—artisan, mechanic, professor, or ploughman though he be—in the pulpit or in the street, in the church or in the house, in a sermon or in an exhortation, in few words or in many, is in the true succession. He may not be in the *ministerial* order of *your* church; but that is another thing. We are not speaking of that, but of what is independent of churches, and of infinitely more importance. If the Spirit of Jesus is in him, constraining him to preach Jesus as Peter, Paul, or John preached Him, he is endowed with power from on high; he is carrying out the commission of Christ, whoever he is, and whatever his relation or position in the churches of men.

Preaching salvation by and through Jesus Christ was the preaching of the apostles. This was the preaching that “turned the world upside down” in their days—the preaching that shook the nations and Popedom in Luther’s times; the preaching that set fire to the stubble of wickedness in the eighteenth century. It is the preaching that commends itself to every man’s conscience; the preaching that alarms, shakes, convicts, and converts the sinner in all ages, places, and circumstances; the preaching that comforts, encourages, and sanctifies God’s people; the preaching that fulfils the designs of Jehovah in the economy of redemption, and brings most honour and praise to His glorious name; the preaching which the world *must* have, or it will never be converted from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Christian Work.

BY REV. JOHN KER.

THOUGHTS FOR AN ADDRESS AT A CHURCH PUBLIC
MEETING,

GROUNDED ON MARK xiii. 34.

THE first thing we read of God doing for man, when He made him, was to assign him work. Before He gave him a right to eat of the fruit of the trees, "He put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." (Gen. ii. 15.) When man is translated to the heavenly Eden it is not to idleness—"They serve Him day and night in His temple." The wise man when he looked abroad on the world made this deep reflection—"All things are full of labour." The calm stars are in ceaseless motion, and every leaf is a world with its busy inhabitants, and the sap coursing through its veins as the life-blood through our own. He who made all worlds has said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." It would be strange, then, if the Christian Church, which was intended to be the beating heart to all this world's activities, were exempted from a law so universal. It was for this end that Christ called its members into it—"Why stand ye here all the day idle?" and then "gave to every man his work." Were it otherwise, it would be against our best and highest nature. Work is not only a duty, but a blessing. Every right deed is a step in the upward scale of being by which we are raised to that rich reward—"Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." That joy is itself larger and nobler employment near the throne of Him who has risen to heaven, not for idle repose, but grander action. If any one is ready to complain of the urgent voices that summon him to labour, of Christ's command, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard," of the pressing wants of the household that seem to grow in piercing earnestness, of fellow-servants who plead for aid, and fellow-sinners whose miseries cry for pity, let such an one remember that this is the ordinance of a wise Master who set us the example of unwearied labour, finishing one work to begin another; that it is the law of the universe of that God who fainteth not, neither is weary in deeds of kindness to His creatures; and that it is in this way God and His Christ left us to the blessed dignity of being their fellow-workers. Instead of praying that God would grant us less work, our request should be that He would give us a greater heart and growing strength to meet all its claims.

We observe that this work of Christ's house is *varied to different individuals*. "The Son of Man gave to every one, that is, to each one His work." In one respect there is something common in the work of all, as there is a common salvation. "This is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent." "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." We have said this is common work for each one, and yet even here there may be a variety in the form. There is a different colour of beauty in different stones that are all of them precious. One man may be burnishing to the sparkle of the diamond, while another is deepening to the glow of the ruby. For this reason there are such different temperaments in Christian character, and varying circumstances in Christian life, that the foundation of the wall of the city may be garnished with all manner of precious stones. Each Christian has his own place and lustre in that temple, and therefore there is no ground to disparage our neighbour, and none to despair of ourselves, if we are both in the hand of Christ. When we look from the individual life to the practical work, the variety is still more marked. There are different members, and all have not the same office. Some are there to teach; some to counsel and administer; some to tend; some to visit the sick bed; some to conduct the temporal affairs of the Church; some to be liberal givers, as God has prospered them; and some without any formal mode of action, come under this description, which applies to them all, "sons of God, without rebuke, shining as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." It is very beautiful to see how the God who has bound His world into a grand harmony by its very adversity, has arranged for this same end in His Church, by giving the members their different faculties of work; how the pure light that comes from the sun breaks into its separate hues when it touches the palace-house of Christ, with its varied cornices and turrets, till every colour lies in tranquil beauty beside its fellow. If it is not so it should be so; and as the Church grows it will be so. Use and ornament—the cornerstone and the copestone—shall both be felt to have their due place. To see how this may be is to perceive that an end can be put to all jealousies and heart-burnings, and may help us even now to take our position calmly and unenviously, working in our department, assured that our labour will be found to contribute to the full proportion of the whole.

Another remark is, that *each individual has means for ascertaining his own work*. The Son of man "gave to every man his work." The master of the house let each servant know what he was expected to attend to, and it must be supposed that Christ will have some means by which He gives a man intimation of

what He looks for from him. It is very vain to seek this, as some have done, in any personal revelation, or any irresistible impression made on the mind. Christ guides men into their sphere of work by the finger of His providence, and by the enlightenment of His word in the hand of His Spirit. A man is to try to find his place of usefulness in the Church of Christ very much as he tries to find it in the world of men, and indeed these two generally go together. If it be sometimes difficult to ascertain this, it may be well to remember that this very difficulty is part of our training. It might be a much simpler and a more satisfactory thing, meanwhile, to have our place directly pointed out to us, but it would not make us so strong in the end.

It is of importance to have some rules to guide us in choosing Christian work, and the first we mention is to consider *for what we are most fitted*. There is scarcely any one who has not some speciality, both as a man and a Christian, which makes him suited for some particular service, and it should be his aim to discover this. There is, of course, the danger of judging too favourably of ourselves, and running where we are not called; and the opposite danger of our diffidence or inertness that leads some to hide their talent in the earth; but in general, if a man will be true and honest, he may, with God's help, come to know what his power for usefulness is. An important guide in this respect is the opinion of our fellow-men when fairly expressed. If there be a strong appeal from them for our help in a good work, it should do much to counterbalance a sense of our own unfitness. This is one of the marked ways in which Christ speaks to us.

Another rule is to consider well *where God has placed us*—our positions in life, our opportunities for particular action or influence, the paths in which we move in society, the leisure that lies in our hand. To examine these carefully, and see how we can, with all wisdom, turn them to Christian profit, is a great matter for every one of us. If there be an earnest desire to do good, even with a sense of much unfitness, it is marvellous how fitness will grow. He who sends the opportunity and the desire will send the qualification, and I do not know of any nobler encomium from the lips of the Great Master than this, "She hath done what she could." The thought of having it from Him at last may strengthen our weak hands, and make our hearts leap with joy. In general, I believe it will be found that the best Christian work is not far from our own door, and that those are mistaken who think they can do nothing till they find some great sphere, and who run hither and thither in search of it. Church agencies have their high value, in some respects,

they are indispensable; but it would be sad indeed if they could measure in their records all the works of Christ's servants. It is often most effectually performed when it is done in no church connexion, but noiselessly and informally in hidden nooks of quiet homes, or walking by the wayside and yet scattering seed in the field. A master among his servants, a workman among his associates, a mother among her children, a sister among brothers, may be dropping words and radiating influences of which there shall be no report till the last great disclosure shall bring out the "Well done, good and faithful servant." The greatest work of the Christian Church should be this natural outgoing of its own life—a life which should obliterate the distinction between the religious and the secular, and make them both one—all work, religion—and all life, worship. Here there is room for each one, whether in the busy world or the calmest retreat; and if we only carefully seek to know *what* we are and *where* we are, and put the question prayerfully, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" we shall find that the Son of man has given us our work, and that He will give us also strength and fitness for it.



Incidents, Scenes, and Characters in the Acts of the Apostles. ..

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER II.

THE PENTECOST; OR, THE ADVENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

LIKE the Son prior to His incarnation, the Holy Spirit had an existence before His advent. Also, as the Son "at sundry times and in divers manners" appeared to the good and true of the old economy, so the Spirit likewise vouchsafed Himself to prophets and others in the ages before His coming at Pentecost. Prophecy and symbol set forth the coming of Christ among men; so they did the coming of the Spirit. Christ in His incarnation, and the work associated therewith, is for all ages and peoples; so is the Spirit in His advent and the work connected with it.

The Father, in His perfect wisdom, chose the time for His

Son to appear to reveal Himself and His will unto the world; so the Son in His perfect wisdom chose the time for His Spirit to be poured out, to reveal Him and His word unto the Church, and through the Church unto the world.

The Son, in His Divinity, appeared in a *form* (human) suited to the end for which He came; so the Spirit in forms adapted to the ends for which He came at the time, and symbolical of His work in all coming generations.

Such are some of the parallels we see in the advent of the Son and of the Spirit.

But let us view more closely the advent of the Spirit as recorded in this chapter.

I. As to the *time* of His advent. It was at the "Pentecost." This is a Greek word denoting the fiftieth day, and is the name of that great feast which the Israelites kept fifty days after the Passover, in commemoration of the giving of the law on Sinai. By fixing this time for the advent of the Spirit, did not God design to teach that the form, the letter, and the symbol of the law were to give way to the life and power of the Gospel? This lesson was wisely given now because of the multitudes of Jews from all parts of the world who, learning it, would take and teach it to others in regions beyond, and so become missionaries of the new dispensation.

II. To *whom* the Spirit made His advent. As in the Saviour's; it was not to the wise and great of this world, but to a few men and women in poor and humble circumstances, previously trained by Jesus, to wait and to expect His coming. See verse 1. The Spirit, as the Father and the Son, is no respecter of persons. To the humble and unknown, so far as the world goes, He comes, providing, like these disciples, they are found with one accord in united, believing prayer, asking and looking for His appearing.

III. In *what manner* He made His advent. He came as a rushing mighty wind, and as cloven tongues of fire. The wind and the fire were not the Spirit any more than the *body* of Jesus was the eternal Son. They were the visible forms which He assumed to show that He was a reality and a power; also to symbolise certain great truths connected with His office, nature, and work. Wind and fire are both elements in nature used to represent the Holy Spirit. Both are destructive powers; both are regenerating and purifying powers; both are working and useful powers. As are these in the natural world for good, so the Spirit by coming in these forms meant to teach us He is in the spiritual world. And does not the *doctrine* taught concerning Him, as well as the history of His operations, show this to be the case?

"Cloven tongues, like as of fire, sat upon them." In this the Spirit signified that power of utterance which He would specially give these disciples, and likewise give to all upon whom He should descend in similar influence and fulness.

IV. The *effects* of His advent. 1. The disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost. They were conscious of His indwelling, they felt His operations. And now, 2. The Spirit demonstrates His indwelling to others: they speak with other tongues as He gives them utterance. This fact spreads like wild-fire, and reaches all classes of foreign Jews who had come up to celebrate the feast, and they were drawn, perhaps by curiosity, to come to the place where the disciples were, to see and hear for themselves. It is a fact what they heard; for as they look and listen they say one to another, "Behold, are not these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God" (verses 7-11.) The advent of Jesus was in itself and in its associations mysteriously miraculous. So was that of the Spirit. We say nothing about the rushing mighty wind, the cloven tongues of fire, and the disciples being filled with the Holy Ghost, but simply mention the fact of these men speaking in other tongues. They spoke perfectly, so as to be understood easily. They spoke in divers tongues, so that each heard. They had not any previous knowledge of these tongues, having never learned them. How, then, did they acquire the power? The answer is, The Holy Spirit gave them this power. They spoke as He gave them utterance. Then all this was above the level of nature, above the capacity of man. It was in the sense of being higher than nature, purely and absolutely miraculous; brought about by direct, unexpected interference of the Power that gave man speech, and with whom originated the first language ever spoken.

V. *Peter's preaching* at the Pentecost was a spontaneous effect of the indwelling of the Spirit, and his sermon was a production for doctrine, argument, perspicuity, force, and results, such as only the promised Power could be the author of. This is the kind of preaching we want in these days. It was essentially model preaching for all times.

VI. The *converts* of the Pentecost were of a model kind. They were *convinced*, were pardoned, were baptized, joined the Church, and remained steadfast in the apostles' doctrine, in *breaking of bread*, and in prayers.

VII. The *Church* of the Pentecost was a model Church in those things which constitute a Church of Christ. 1. It was baptised of the Spirit. 2. Adhered to the doctrine and means of the Master. 3. Were at peace. 4. Harmonised in prayer and labour. 5. Loved each other. 6. Were happy and social. 7. Were faithful witnesses to Jesus. 8. And boldly endured all things for His name sake.

The advent of the Spirit was not to be for a period, as was that of the Son. "It is expedient that I go," said Jesus. But of the Spirit He said He should "abide." It was as expedient for the Spirit to remain as it was for Him to come or for the Son to go. It is a truth that the Spirit does not now show Himself as on the Pentecost. Judging from the appearances of some individual churches and Christians, one may almost ask whether there is any Holy Ghost or not. But notwithstanding these appearances, it is a Scriptural fact that He is the living, divine, unchangeable Spirit of Jesus still in His Church. He has not and never will depart from the Church of Christ while in its militant state. His *manifestations* in signs and wonders and divers miracles among the ministry and laity, in the means and ordinances of the Church, are dependent on the membership of the Church. Had there been no waiting, praying, believing, unity, in the degree there was among the disciples in Jerusalem, would the Spirit have come as He did? Let the Church do now as it did then, and see whether the Holy Ghost will not come down in ways answering to the necessities of the times as much as at the Pentecost.

Dr. Jenkins, regarding the scenes and events of the Pentecost as a revival of religion, has traced an analogy between that and a revival of modern times. 1. Both originate in a spirit of humble, united, and expectant prayer. 2. Both commence with the ministers of Christ. 3. Both are open, and public, and attract public attention. 4. Both are liable to misrepresentation, derision, and mocking. 5. Both are produced and maintained by the same kind of preaching. 6. Both affect the bodily frame and the animal feelings of men. 7. Both produce numerous conversions. 8. Both give a powerful impulse to benevolence. 9. Both exert a strong and mighty influence on public opinion. 10. Both are permanent in their effects.



DIVINE GOODNESS.—The eyes of His goodness are as large to embrace all creatures, as the eyes of His omniscience are to behold them.—*Charnock*.

Expositions of some of the shorter Psalms.

BY THE REV. THORNLEY SMITH.

PSALM VI.

THIS Psalm, like the fourth, is addressed to the Chief Musician on Neginoth. The former word so rendered occurs fifty-five times in the Book of Psalms, and signifies *one who shews eminent ability in any department*, and thus a *master or director of the choir*. The latter word means *on my stringed instruments*, implying that the singing of the Psalm was to be accompanied by a harp or lyre. To these words there is added to the title of this Psalm *upon Sheminith*, which signifies *an octave*, or *an eighth* (1 Chron. xv. 21; Psalm xii.), and is no doubt another musical direction.

It is ascribed to David, and appears to have been written in the morning, for it looks back on a sleepless, tearful night. David was suffering deeply; and though he did not yield to despair under his trials, neither did he consider them of little moment. No great soul ever makes light of tribulation. The tenderer the heart, the deeper is the feeling; and religion is not stoicism, nor in any way a friend to it. But whilst David *felt* his trials, he felt also that he had a friend in God; and instead of giving himself up to inordinate sorrow, he girded himself to its endurance, and placed his trust in the Lord.

The Psalm contains ten verses, which are divided into three strophes, which division we shall here follow.

I. A PRAYER FOR MERCY. Verse 1. "O Jehovah, rebuke me not in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure." Perhaps the Psalmist here prayed for—

1. *An alleviation of his sufferings*, as did the Prophet Jeremiah when he said, "O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in Thine anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing." Jer. x. 24. And many interpreters understand David's language in this sense—not as a prayer for the entire removal of his sorrow, but rather for a mitigation of it. And doubtless chastisement is often sent in love; and therefore the man who would decline it acts against his own advantage. With patience and resignation to the Divine will should the good man bear the rod, remembering that "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Heb. xii. 6. It is God's *wrath* we have to fear, not the fatherly corrections of His hand.

2. Or it may be that David here prays for *the entire removal of his sorrow*; which appears the more probable, as from verse 9 *it seems that he obtained that for which he prayed*. Matters

had come to an extreme with him. He could endure no longer. It seemed as if God were angry with him to such an extent that not His displeasure only, but His *hot* displeasure, was upon him, which was more than he could bear. It was, perhaps, after his grievous fall that David thus felt; and, if so, this Psalm, like Psalm li., may have been written at that period. There is nothing worse to bear than a sense of God's deserved anger. The lash of tongues, the scorn of men, the derision of his foes, David could sustain; but the hot displeasure of God was as a fire that consumed his strength, and under which, if it were not speedily removed, he would utterly waste away. So is it with many a penitent sinner. Scathed by a sense of the anger of the Most High, he pleads for mercy in language such as this, and as long as he can thus plead there is hope.

II. AN EXPANSION OF THE PRAYER. This middle strophe—verses 2-7—is much longer than the other two, and the language used is plaintive and most sorrowful. Observe—

1. *The Psalmist's condition.* "I am weak," he says, "and my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed." So great was his distress that it had impaired his physical strength, and he was like a drooping plant that lay straggling on the ground. Nay, his very bones were terrified, so that they trembled again as if smitten by the hand of a mighty foe. Wisdom is said to be "health to the navel, and marrow to the bones" (Prov. iii. 8); but sin and folly bring disquietude and distress, and thus the bones—the very framework of the body—become feeble, and the strongest man totters like an infant child. And David's soul was also terrified; for here, in fact, was the seat of all his grief. When the soul, the mind, the inner man is sore vexed, his physical nature *must* tremble; and do what he will to throw off the weight by which he is oppressed, it will sooner or later crush him, unless God's mercy interfere. Frederick II., who did all he could in that direction, said in one of his letters, "I should feel no pain, but I do feel it against my will; it consumes me, it lacerates me; an internal feeling overcomes my strength, and extorts from me complaints and frequent groans."

3. *The Psalmist's prayer.* "Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah. O Jehovah, heal me. Return, O Jehovah, deliver my soul; but Thou, O Jehovah, how long?" How pitiful is this language! It is like the sobbing of a sorrowful child, and such indeed it was. But David flies to the right source, and there prays for mercy, pleads for the return of the Divine presence, and asks for the restoration of his spiritual health. Compare Psalm li. 8-10. It is nothing less than this that man wants when conscious of his guilt and sin, and to God in Christ must he repair for pardon, for there alone can real help be found.

But David says, "How long?" a broken expression occasioned by the violence of his grief. It is a very significant expression, and is said to have been Calvin's motto, from whom the most intense pain could never extort another word. And it has been the language of the Church in all ages, whilst the souls under the altar are represented by St. John as reiterating the cry, Rev. iv. 10; and "*How long, O Lord, how long?*" still continues to rise up before the throne, and to be echoed and re-echoed by the saints from age to age. We must remember, however, that what seems long to us is not long to Him, and that He has promised to avenge His own elect, though, apparently, He bears long with them. Luke xviii. 7.

3. *The Psalmist's reason for his prayer.* He feared that he should die, and he appealed to God to remove his sorrow lest he should be overwhelmed by it; but specially on this ground that the dead cannot praise God, which he yet wished to do. "For in death there is no remembrance of Thee; in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?" verse 5. Compare Psalm lxxxviii. 10; cxv. 17, 18; and the words of Hezekiah, Isaiah xxxviii. 18. By *sheol* here, which word is rendered *grave*, the Psalmist meant the yawning abyss into which everything mortal sinks, and from which not only the light of this world, but the light of God's presence, is excluded. We may substitute for it the word *gehenna*, or hell, and it is strictly true that there there is no joyful remembrance of God; nor is it improbable that this was what David feared—dying in sin, and being cut off for ever from all hope of mercy. It is true that the doctrine of a future life was not fully revealed under the Old Testament economy; but it cannot be supposed that the Psalmist thought of dying as passing into a state of utter unconsciousness, nor is any such thought ever entertained by the sacred writers. The dead are not really dead, but still exist somewhere; and the sainted dead can praise the Lord, for they all live unto Him.

4. *The Psalmist's ground for entertaining this fear.* "I am weary with my groaning," &c., on 6, 7. Consuming grief preyed upon his heart, and would soon, he thought, carry him away. The eye is the sun of the human countenance, and it is said that the Greek word for man signifies one that looks upward. But in extreme sorrow the eye sinks, loses its brightness, and becomes dull and languid, so that it no longer looks upward, and can sometimes scarcely see at all. Such was David's state. By reason of long-continued grief and floods of tears, which made even his couch to swim in the night, his eye had lost its wonted fire, and had become like that of an old man. Is it not often so with the awakened sinner? Are there *not many* whom the fear of eternal death almost consumes

away? Yet even such grief is better than impenitence and obstinacy of heart, for it will lead, as in David's case, into a brighter sphere.

III. THE RESULT is therefore given by the Psalmist, ver. 8-10. He now becomes a new man; God has heard his prayer. Faith and hope have raised him out of the mire of despondency, and once again he rejoices in the consciousness of the Divine regard.

1. Mark *the address to his enemies*. "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." They had assailed him on every side, mocked him, insulted him, and triumphed in his distress. Wicked men often do this. If a good man falls into sin they rejoice, and though themselves were perhaps his tempters, are the first to taunt him when he yields. But David now says to such, "Begone, depart from me," as if he felt that they could do him no further harm. So was it with David's Son after His resurrection from the dead. He had triumphed over every foe. He had trampled sin, and death, and hell beneath his feet; and, conscious of the victory He had gained, He appeared again among His disciples; not as the Man of Sorrow, but as the subject of the loftiest and calmest joy. And so shall it be in the end with every penitent believer, and with every tried saint. He shall bid his enemies depart, and he shall see them again no more for ever.

2. *The reason he assigns*. "For Jehovah hath heard the voice of my weeping," &c., ver. 8, 9. In the East, silent grief is not much known; hence people say of one in lamentation, "Have we not heard the voice of his mourning?" God had heard that of David, and had graciously received his prayer; and now the winter was past, the rain was over and gone, and the voice of the turtle was heard in the land. When God receives our prayers, the summer returns to the soul, and often, as in a moment, does the believer seem like one whose eyes have been opened so suddenly, that the light is too dazzling for him to behold. How soon can God dissipate the clouds which hang over our head, and pour upon us rays of blessing and of grace. He has but to speak and to say, "Let there be light," and there is light.

3. *The ultimate end*, ver. 10. Here the meaning is not "Let mine enemies be ashamed," &c., as in our version; but, "All mine enemies *shall* be ashamed," &c. The terror of the psalmist passes on to them. The returning of the Lord, and the turning back of His enemies, are related as cause and effect. Are you in trouble? Do foes assail you? The very moment your prayer is heard they will fall back and leave you possessor of the field. They cannot resist you when Jehovah comes to your help. Satan, the world, and sin, give way before the child of God when they

see that he has prevailed in prayer; and, suddenly abashed, they sink into obscurity, and seek to hide their heads.

Thus the last words of the Psalm fall back upon ver. 2. There the writer says, "My bones are vexed;" here he says, "Mine enemies shall be sore vexed." Thus oftentimes are things reversed;—the sorrowful are cheered, whilst the gay and thoughtless scorner is cast down.

Materials for Sermons.

VIII.—LUKEWARMNESS.

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."—REVELATION iii. 15, 16.

IN prosecuting the subject, I purpose—

I. To describe the nature and symptoms of this evil.

II. To show why it is that Christ expresses such an abhorrence of it.

I. TO DESCRIBE THE NATURE AND SYMPTOMS OF THIS EVIL. This disease is only found where some profession of religion is made. The irreligious world is not lukewarm. The lukewarm individual may retain the form of sound doctrine, avoid gross vices, and continue in communion with some Christian society. He may observe in some measure all the form of godliness; but he wants the spirit, life, and activity of religion. But let us enumerate some particulars in which lukewarmness generally discovers itself.

1. This may be observed in the conduct of professors as to the ordinances of public worship. The lively Christian says, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go up unto the house of the Lord." Hence you see him anticipating the opportunity of waiting upon God, as a man expects any season of pleasure and delight. He suffers not a trivial hindrance to prevent his attendance on religious duties. On the contrary, the lukewarm come reluctantly to the ordinances of Divine worship, and are secretly pleased when an excuse is suggested for absenting themselves. These persons commonly consider the sermon as the principal object. They are also ready to say to ministers, "*Speak to us smooth things, and do not offend the audience*"

with plain dealing." Such persons are peculiarly attentive to the manner, voice, and delivery of the preacher; and, above all, they recommend that the service be short. They attend from custom, or to pacify conscience, but delight not in the sacred service.

2. The case is similar in respect of family religion. If this be not totally neglected, it is very superficially and irregularly conducted. Business or visitants easily induce the lukewarm to omit it entirely; or it is unseasonably hurried over, when perhaps several of the family are half asleep. Thus the souls of the children and domestics are neglected. They who are thus cold and formal in public and family worship must be still more so in private. This, however, falls not under observation, but the lukewarm cannot but be conscious of it.

3. The two characters may also be discriminated by the company which they prefer. Business may carry the most zealous believer into the society of worldly men; but he is out of his element, and bears a cross all the while. When the necessity ceases, he consequently returns to the society of pious persons; and he habitually says with David, "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee and keep Thy precepts." But the lukewarm find numerous pretences for visiting among ungodly associates. Their profane conversation or frivolous behaviour do not render them very uneasy, and it happens that they have some objection or other against every one of their acquaintance who is strictly religious. This man, though pious, is unpleasant in his demeanour, and another has given cause of offence. Thus they excuse themselves to their own consciences, as well as to others, while they separate from the company of religious people. They yield to solicitation in one instance, and then say, "What harm in this?" They go a little further, and urge the same excuse.

4. I shall only add one more particularity of the lukewarm professor. He is commonly distinguished by a proportionable measure of spiritual pride. Confident of his superior wisdom and attainments, he arrogates to himself the pre-eminence among his brethren. The apostle pointed out this symptom of the disease to the Corinthians when he said, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich; ye have reigned as kings without us." Yet while they were thus puffed up, their glorying was not good. The Church at Laodicea also said, "I am rich and increased in goods, and I have need of nothing, and knew not that she was wretched, and miserable, and

poor, and blind, and naked;" which is the exact description of spiritual pride.

II. To show why it is that CHRIST EXPRESSES SUCH AN ABHORRENCE OF IT. When He said, "I would thou wert cold or hot," &c., we cannot suppose He meant that such professors were always more wicked than notorious profligates, though, considering their advantages, they are in fact more heinously criminal. I apprehend that our Lord especially referred to the dishonour done by the lukewarm to His name, and the evil consequences of their infectious example. A bad servant may do more mischief while he remains in the family than he could do were he dismissed from it; and in like manner, lukewarm professors do far more harm to the cause of Christ by pretending to religion than they could do by openly renouncing Christianity. One Achan in the camp causes more trouble and loss to Israel than all the hosts of the Canaanites.

1. Lukewarm professors give irreligious people an unfavourable idea of evangelical doctrines; but were there no loose characters among those that contend for these principles, were they all "a peculiar people, zealous of good works," their objections would soon be silenced.

2. The lukewarm are the bane of those who have been newly impressed with a sense of Divine things. If such come in the way of these lukewarm professors, they are easily seduced into false notions of liberty, not in keeping God's commandments, but in disregarding them. They are now taught that strictness in duty and self-denial deduct from the freeness of Divine grace. Thus numbers who apparently set out well obtain a false peace, and finally settle among formal disputations or Antinomian professors.

3. Ministers of the Gospel are more exposed to temptations from the lukewarm than from all other men whatever. We have like passions with our neighbours, and when we have forfeited the friendship of the world by adhering to the truths of the Gospel, we are reluctant to meet the frown of religious people. Yet unless we stand firm against the insinuations of Laodicean professors, and venture their keen reproaches and calumnies, we shall not deliver much above half our message; *we shall separate the practice from the doctrines of Christianity; and pass over in general terms those very subjects which the*

state of our congregations require to be most fully and plainly enforced. Thus ministers lie under strong temptations to shun "declaring the whole counsel of God," and to "keep back some things profitable unto the people." We should, however, seriously consider the apostle's words, "If I were a man-pleaser, I should not be the servant of Jesus Christ." In these and many other ways the lukewarm disgrace the Gospel and retard its progress. Can we therefore wonder at our Lord's decided language against such pernicious characters?

4. We do not say that every person infected with any degree of this disease is an hypocrite; but we affirm most constantly that the case is awfully dangerous. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" but how can a man know that he is in Christ unless he be conscious of this change, and manifest it in his disposition and conduct? If his spirit and practice do not accord to that of the Christian as described in the oracles of God, ought he not to conclude that "Satan, transformed into an angel of light," has deceived him, and that he builds upon the sand, by hearing the words of Christ and not doing them?

5. Supposing, however, a man's lukewarmness not fatal, yet the uncertainty and apparent danger of his condition are sufficient to excite great alarm and distress. If he be saved, it will be "as by fire"; and what a gloomy prospect, what terrors and remorse upon a death-bed, are before him! These are the only tokens for good of which his case can admit. And is this the provision you are making for that awful crisis?

6. But some continue to quiet their minds by thinking that they make no pretensions to religion, and are not, therefore, concerned in the rebuke. Let me, however, demand of you, whether you have then openly renounced and abjured Christianity? Or do you expect to be called Christians? If you do, this implies a profession of religion, however unmeaning and hypocritical; and your indifference about these things proves you the most lukewarm of all that bear the Christian name. And is this your confidence? Or do you intend to plead this before the tribunal of your Judge?

7. Should any of you be excited to inquire what you ought to do, the answer is obvious. Consider the salvation of your souls as your grand concern. Be diligent in attendance on all the *means of grace*. Repent, and bring forth fruits meet for

repentance. Meditate seriously on the death of Christ; the design, causes, and effects of it, and the obligations conferred by that great event. Examine particularly every part of your disposition and conduct, and be willing to know the whole of your case as it really is. Withdraw from the company of the lukewarm and associate with zealous Christians. Above all, pray earnestly for the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, which alone can prevent or cure lukewarmness, and maintain the life and power of godliness in the soul. Let me, likewise, call your attention to the subsequent part of our Lord's address to such lukewarm professors. He condescends to say even to them, "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire," &c.

JOHN SMITH.

IX.—THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."—JOHN iii. 14, 15.

HERE is properly a TYPE: a story, figure, or symbol actually applied in the New Testament to Christ. Nothing less than this constitutes a type. Our Lord compares Himself to the brazen serpent—as that was lifted up among the dying Israelites, so He, the Lord Jesus Christ, must be lifted up among perishing sinners, and all who believe and look at Him shall live.

Let us compare the type and the antitype.

I. In the deadly nature of the malady.

II. In the apparent insufficiency of the remedy.

III. In the suddenness and perfection of the cure.

I. IN THE DESPERATE NATURE OF THE MALADY.

1. What could be more fatal or terrible than this judgment?

The people had again sinned (Numbers xxi. 5, &c.)—"Their soul was discouraged—they spake against God and against Moses," and they "loathed the manna." "And the Lord sent fiery serpents among them, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died." So they were humbled, and besought Moses to help them.

"These fiery serpents"—so called either from their appearance or from the effects of their bite—spread destruction and *terror* through the camp! Old and young, rich and poor, all *suffered alike*—sorrow, pain, and death prevailed.

2. What a picture of that wider and more terrible desolation, occasioned by the bite of that great serpent the devil, who has spread his poison through the whole soul of every man, introducing sin, sorrow, pain, and universal death—a death succeeded by a life of eternal woe!

This plague of Israel was partial; that which afflicts us is universal; in every man “the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint;” and in all peoples and nations it is the same. Guilt, condemnation, and wrath universally reign. By nature “we are the children of the wicked one,”—“of our father the devil.”—“who is the god of this world.” (2 Cor. iv. 4.) “Under the curse”—oh! who can deliver us?

II. THE APPARENT INSUFFICIENCY OF THE REMEDY.

1. When Moses prayed for the people, instead of removing the serpents, God commanded Moses “to make a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.”

It required strong faith to do this, and many objections might have been made against it. Of what use could this image be? and was it not unlawful to make a brazen image and worship it (as the Israelites did afterwards), 2 Kings xviii. 4. It seemed not only fruitless and absurd, but contrary to God’s repeated command; so that Moses might well have hesitated. But he did not, but simply obeyed, “and made a serpent of brass, and put it on a pole.”

2. Just so do men argue of our remedy.

“The Son of man lifted up” on the cross, and dying for sinners, appears to many an insufficient remedy for the sin of the world. Of what avail are the death and sufferings of an obscure Jew, crucified in Jerusalem 1,800 years ago? How can this sacrifice take away sin? Besides, does not God abhor human sacrifices? This must ever so appear to unbelief!

Yet “as Moses lifted up the serpent,” so we lift up Christ among the perishing sinners of this world. We assert that He was God and man in one Christ; that being so, His precious blood avails to take away sin—to secure pardon, peace, comfort, grace, salvation, to all that believe in Him; and therefore we entreat, and exhort, and beseech men, saying, “Behold the Lamb of God that *taketh* away the sin of the world.” “We preach

Christ crucified." "Look unto Me, and be ye saved," &c. *Isaiah* xlv. 22.

III. BEHOLD THE SUDDENNESS AND PERFECTION OF THE CURE.

1. How simply told!

"It came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." We can imagine all stages of the fiery disease; some just bitten, some in the severity of the torture, some fast sinking into death—little children, strong men, delicate women—all writhing in torment; but look, see, lift your half-closed eye, behold yonder brazen serpent, and one glance availed—they lived! In an instant passed from death to life.

2. Just so, and most accurately, of our Great Remedy!

The blessing here typified is not only a *part* of salvation, it is *salvation itself!* A man is lost, and he looks to Jesus and he is saved—as surely as the dying thief. In a moment—there must be some period of time when a penitent, broken-hearted sinner beholds Jesus by faith, and that moment saves him. The act of faith, pictured by "looking to Jesus," saves and justifies—so that if the man died the next moment he would be in heaven with Jesus. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "All that believe are justified from all things." (*Acts* xiii. 39.) "And there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (*Rom.* viii. 1, 2.) "He has passed from death unto life, and shall never die." Could the cure of the dying Israelites have been more perfect?

1. *Do you believe the desperate and deadly nature of sin, and your state of guilt before God?* You will never seek or find Christ until you know this, feel it, lament it, and fear!

2. *Admitting the malady and its deadly consequences, are you content with the only remedy? Are you trusting to the finished work of Christ alone for your pardon and acceptance with God? Mix aught with this, and you are lost! There must be no merit of your own.*

3. *Receiving, believing, and confessing all this, does your life agree thereto? Saved by Christ from guilt and punishment, has He saved you from the love, power, and practice of sin? If not, distrust your faith—it is spurious, defective! Christ is no Saviour to them who are not saved from their sins.* *Acts* iii. 26.

DR. CLOSE.

X.—HELP IN TROUBLE.

"Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."—PSALM l. 15.

I. IN these words we recognise the voice of Jehovah, who is infinite in knowledge, grace, love, and power, whose covenant is unchangeable, and whose word never fails, and whose promises are not and cannot be broken.

II. In these words we are presented with a *Divine directory*. It is addressed to the man of God in a time or *day* of trouble. All our times are in the Lord's hands, and we are assured that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Through many scenes of darkness, of perilous storms, dangerous temptations, and gloomy conflicts have the righteous to pass through, not only the troubles common to men in general, but also those that are inseparably connected with a state of grace, which is also a state of peculiar trial—a warfare. The Christian here is in an enemy's country—Satan, sin, and the world; and amidst the conflict in which he is frequently engaged, he has sometimes to walk under the hidings of God's face. This is indeed a trial, and adds to his other trials. And now what is he to do? God Himself directs him—"Call upon Me."

Then, O man of God, obey this Divine command with humility (Job i. 20, 21; xlii. 6), with persevering importunity and earnestness (Heb. iii. 17-19).

III. In these words we are presented with the Divine engagements, "I will deliver thee," "Thou shalt glorify Me."

1. "I will deliver thee." (1.) "At the time I see best." Do not impatiently spurn the cup, nor be angry like Jonah (iv. 9). Your Heavenly Friend will not suffer you to be tempted above what you can bear. Leave your cause in His hands; not one trial more or one moment's exercise longer than is needful. (2.) "I will deliver thee in what *way* I see best." His ways are not our ways. And, though God may not grant an immediate deliverance, yet He will give seasonable support under trials. Witness the case of Paul (2 Cor. xii. 7-10). At other times He delivers by removing the cause altogether. (3.) By what means He sees best. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly. A rod, a raven, He has employed as instruments. At other times, by the immediate interposition of His providence, He will deliver. He cannot deny Himself. (4.) "I will

deliver thee." This deliverance He completely and finally accomplishes by a happy removal from the scene of suffering and trial; a day or a night of sorrow will then be exchanged for everlasting songs of praise.

2. "Thou shalt glorify Me." (1.) By an acknowledgment of His sovereign right to dispose of us and ours as seemeth good in His sight. (2.) By a holy, inward submission and resignation to His will. (3.) By an experimental enjoyment and acknowledgment of His mercy, grace, and goodness. (4.) "Thou shalt glorify Me." Ah, my tried, tempted brother, tossed with tempest and not comforted—but only for a little moment. Here, see to what a dignity thou art called. "Thou *shalt* glorify Me." By reflecting His image whilst upon earth, and by showing forth His praise and His glory in the Church triumphant. Oh, then, with what delight and admiration will you ascribe all glory to the rich, sovereign, and saving grace of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for your everlasting deliverance from all sin!

1. How blessed the believer's privilege!

2. How prevalent the effectual fervent prayers of a man of God!

3. How condescending and efficacious the grace of God!

XI.—THE PROGRESSIVE POWER OF SIN.

"Now about that time, Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church. And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also."—Acts xii. 1-3.

"About that time," *i.e.*, some eleven years after the Gospel of the cross had commenced its struggles, and had won its first victories, and was rapidly pushing its triumphs beyond the pale of Judaism. "Herod," called "Agrippa," "the elder or great," grandson of "Herod the Great" of the Gospels, "stretched forth his hands," hitherto held back by the restraints of conscience; but now he deliberately snaps these restraints, and executed James "the great" in the most ignominious of the four modes of Jewish capital punishment. Success with James emboldened Herod to new outrages; "he proceeded further." The life of sin commenced grew gradually stronger. Sin being a principle of life, like every other life, animal or vegetable, develops and matures itself;

constantly unfolding, it spreads and vitiates every vital of the moral system; it cannot be stationary, its essential elements are principles of progress, daily strengthening and intensifying.

I. EVERY SIN CREATES THE STIMULUS TO ANOTHER.

1. *In creating an appetite for more.* Having killed James, Herod's desire to "proceed further" was originated and quickened. Though sin is not always palatable at first, yet each act of sin implants a stronger relish.

2. *In affording a reason for a further sin.* Herod "saw it it pleased the Jews," therefore, "he proceeded further." The subtle tempter coins many a plausible reason. The man who yields to the first, finds in that yielding a reason for a second. Each sin is an iron link that clasps into another welded with consummate skill by the arch fiend. First purpose only small, final programme not sketched at starting-point. The hoary sinner would have started with horror, if at commencement some prophet had told of the darker deeds of his after life; for sin's power strengthens unconsciously, it steals over the soul with the noiseless step of the evening darkness.

3. *In that it necessitates another sin to complete the last.* Having basely succeeded in gratifying the mob, Herod felt it necessary to keep up their excited pleasure by renewed outrages. The lie told requires another to give it the colour of truth. The sin-path is a terrible decline, and as sin proceeds the impelling power develops and strengthens. (1.) Its first step is that of the secret sin, colouring the thoughts and vitiating its imaginations. (2.) From the quiet thought it flows into words and works. (3.) And culminates in frequent and confirmed sin. "Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."

II. SIN GRADUALLY WEAKENS AND FINALLY EXTIRPATES THE POWER OF GOOD.

1. *The strength unused is quietly lost.* Arm in sling for years becomes paralysed; so moral power unused is unconsciously lost.

2. *The sensitiveness to wrong, so characteristic of early life, grows dulled, and keen appreciation of goodness removed.* When first out in dark night, the darkness is felt most oppressive, but it soon grows familiar; so blackness of sin which first strikes us with horror is soon familiarized. The deceased eye cannot

bear the light; so sinner loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil.

3. *The talent unimproved is buried, until at length the very power to be good is taken away.* The soul's power of goodness grows out by non-use. The Godward tendencies wither and dry up.

4. This stage is reached only by *gradual* efforts. (1.) Sin is first excused. "Is it not a little thing?" (2.) Then plead a necessity for it. Argue circumstances were such it could not be avoided. (3.) Eventually grow to delight in and boast of it; the depraved taste relishes it. (4.) Until force of habit so strengthens that he cannot cease from it, and by despair is led to succumb to its power.

III. SIN NEUTRALIZES THE SPIRITUAL INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY GHOST IN HIMSELF OR IN OTHER AGENCIES.

1. There is that in the sinner's heart which systematically repels all holy influences. It is not the sinner's intention to do this, yet, apart from any resolve, his life of sin is a perpetual urging of the Spirit to depart, and leave him alone; is a ceaseless quenching of all heavenly influences, and source of vexing to the Divine Striver, till eventually—

2. His life of sin creates between him and heaven that great gulf across which the rich man gazed, but only to see that heaven, with all its salvation, was removed so far from him.

3. Every man who lives in sin is daily widening and deepening this gulf—constantly thrusting off from him all God-sent influences, which attract the willing to the Cross and to the sky.

4. This deprivation goes on so quietly that Satan oft lulls the conscience, so that the soul's terrible isolation from goodness and from God is rarely felt—so darkens the vision that the broad chasm is beheld not until eternity uncovers it.

5. Though this isolation is seldom intensely felt, it is none the less true. The Bible presents a few instances of a soul cutting off from itself those gracious heavenly influences, leaving itself like some majestic vessel loosed from its moorings, and tossed wildly at the mercy of the storm. There is Saul, King of Israel, as the piteous wail rises from his quivering lip, when he found the "Lord answered him not," and the silence is broken by the prophet's withering rebuke, as from the cave the

Spirit speaks. Here is Herod, with one rapid stride in sin after another, blocking out from his soul heaven's gracious power, until "the anger of the Lord smote him." The soul's isolation from all holy influences is like a rock sundered from mainland by terrific earthquake.

6. The influences of the Holy Spirit exerted on the sinner are ever strong in early life, but gradually become less powerful and less frequent as the power of sin strengthens. An appeal to sinner's conscience confirms this.

Lessons—

1. Take heed of the beginning of evil. One bold step in sin gives Satan advantage to tempt to another, and provokes God to leave.

2. Abandon sin promptly, lest its power so enslave that escape becomes almost impossible.

3. God never arbitrarily interferes with the sinner's course until the measure of his iniquity is brim full, and calls of providence and grace hushed in the louder revel.

4. Trifle not with the Divine forbearance, for "the Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Shrewsbury.

Divisions of Texts.

"Bring my soul out of prison.—Ps. cxlii. 7.

I. **W**HEN MAY A SOUL BE SAID TO BE IN PRISON?

1. In a state of guilt and condemnation. 2. In trouble. 3. In bondage. 4. In slavish fear. 5. In powerful temptation.

II. THE MEANS TO USE TO HAVE THE SOUL BROUGHT OUT OF TROUBLE. *Prayer.*

1. Humble. 2. Earnest. 3. Persevering. 4. Believing.

III. THE DELIVERER OF THE SOUL FROM PRISON. The Lord.

1. By His promises. 2. By His Spirit. 3. By His grace.
4. By His providence.

"For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in time when Thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."—Ps. xxxii. 6, 7.

I. *The persons who pray.* The godly.

II. *When they pray.* "In a time when Thou mayest be found."

III. *What they pray for.* "For this," that is, pardon, &c.

IV. *The privileges they enjoy.* "Thou art my hiding place," &c.

"Lord, what is man?"—Ps. cxliv. 3.

Man would give many and contradictory answers to this question. The Lord who made man only knows man, and He only can answer truthfully. View man—

I. *In a state of nature.*

II. *In a state of grace.*

III. *In a state of torment.*

IV. *In a state of glory.*

Examine the Scriptures, and the Lord in them will say what is man in these four aspects. Man is in a state of nature or grace in this world, and in a state of torment or glory in the other. No midway state.

"He hath done all things well."—MARK vii. 37.

Human testimony to the rectitude and goodness of the Divine procedure. Look at this—

I. In respect to TIME. II. ORDER. III. NUMBER. IV. NATURE OR KIND. V. EFFECTS. VI. DESIGN.

In respect to each of them "He hath done all things well."

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."—HEB. xi. 4.

The faith of the spiritual and the faith of the natural.

There is a natural and there is a spiritual. Paul speaks of it. All Bible speaks of it. All creation illustrates it. Abel spiritual. Cain natural.

I. THE FAITH OF THE NATURAL.

1. This is first in order. Cain came first and offered. We

see this in the heathen world ; in the natural mind ; in childhood.

2. It is without a Christ, though not altogether without an offering. Cain brought an offering—unaccepted and less excellent.

3. *Is a dead and formal faith.* Offers dead things.

II. THE FAITH OF THE SPIRITUAL.

1. This *second in order.* First, that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual. 1 Cor. xv.

2. Brings an offering which is more excellent, and accepted.

3. Which has a Christ as its object of trust for salvation. Abel in his faith and offering had respect to Christ who was to come; ours in Christ who has come and is.

4. Obtains righteousness and a sense of it; by which he obtained witness, &c., "God testifying," &c.

5. A faith which lives when the subject of it is dead; and which in its works and influences speaks to surviving generations. "He being dead," &c.

Conclusion—

1. You belong to the natural or spiritual.

2. Which ?

3. As you are, so is your faith and offering.

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"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ : for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."—Rom. i. 16.

I. The *subject* of this avowal ; the Gospel of Christ crucified ; good news of Christ, from Christ.

II. The *substance* of it ; of what is it spoken ; of whom ; to whom.

III. The *reason* of it ; Divine energy of the Gospel, its truth, its spirit ; its triumphs over opposition, by means of feeble agencies, irresistible, extensive ; its effects in the believer ; its impartiality.

DR. LYTCH.

"Exercise thyself unto godliness."—1 TIM. iv. 7.

I. Ascertain what particulars are included in godliness, and then notice what it is to be exercised therein.

II. Notice the superiority of this exercise to all others, and the benefits to be derived therefrom.

III. Exhort to a prompt and regular exercise in godliness.

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Thoughts about Jesus.

BY A PREACHER.

AS the image of God, Jesus is the *Reflection* of the invisible God to man; and as the "*Word*," He is the *Revealer* of the silent God to man.

THOUGH Jesus is the "Son of God," He is not inferior to God. He is God of God, very God of very God, eternal, unchangeable, almighty, all-knowing, all-wise, &c.

"*All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine*," is language of Jesus in which may be seen the interchangeable equality of the Two Persons and Their Proprieties, according to another Divine utterance of Jesus "I and My Father are one;" and again, "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself;" and again, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

It was not human *egotism* or *vanity* when Jesus, speaking of the queen of the south coming from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, declared, "Behold a greater than Solomon is here." He spoke the words of truthfulness. He was the Root of David, who was the father of Solomon; so that Solomon's wisdom, as David's goodness, was *derived* from Him: and so every excellency of both. Hence His superiority both to Solomon and Solomon's father.

If, then, the queen of the south, a sovereign of wealth, intelligence, and power, went so far to hear Solomon, how far should I be willing to go, if necessary, in order to see and hear Him who is Solomon's Lord? But, alas! am I not too much like the Jews, who would not either see the superior glory or hear the superior wisdom of the GREATER than Solomon, although in the midst of them? "Open Thou mine eyes and ears, O Lord."

If Jesus has such claims upon my attention, and I give greater attention to human teachers than to Him, and go farther and do more to hear them, and slight Him who is near me and asks only my faith and love, what may I expect my condemnation to be? Would the queen of the south have gone so far to have

heard Solomon, if a wiser and more glorious than he had been in her own country?

It is the *sickly* child in the family that the mother thinks most of, cares most for, shows most sympathy, and renders the softest, gentlest attention. So Jesus: He seeks the *lost*; He heals the *diseased*; He gives rest to the *burdened*; He comforts them that *mourn*; He binds up the *broken* heart. The *bruised* reed He will not break; the *smoking flax* He will not quench.

As when the sons of Jesse, Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah, and seven more, passed before Samuel, he chose neither of them as king for Israel; but when David came, "ruddy, of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon," he was chosen to be Israel's king; so, when angel, or minister, or magistrate, or wealth, or power, or pleasure, or knowledge, pass before me as candidates for dominion over my faith and love in the spiritual kingdom of my soul, I would say, "Neither do I choose any of these. Is there not another?" And as Jesus, the "fairest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely," stands before me, my soul exclaims, "This is He: arise, anoint Him as thy King. This is thy beloved. Lift up the everlasting gates, and let the King of glory come in."

THE way to have life, family, business, company, reading, and everything else sanctified to our enjoyment and good, is to have Jesus in each. And as He came to the wedding at Cana when He was invited, so He will come to our families, business, &c., if we only ask Him.

ALTHOUGH Jesus was at the wedding in Cana, His presence did not do away with the necessity of things to eat and drink. With Him in the midst of all our enjoyments and occupations of life, we must have the things necessary for life's sustenance. When we have put off these our tabernacles, and enter into that spiritual building, we shall have only Jesus, and need nothing more.

JESUS, in arranging that the best wine should come last, contrary to the custom of the country, symbolised what is the order in His kingdom of grace in opposition to that of the world: He gives His people the best things last, heaven, with all its endless and ineffable glories. The world gives its disciples its best things first, the pleasures of sin: and its worst last, deprivation of all good here, and a *bankruptcy* hereafter for ever and ever.

To be accepted of Jesus, whether with Him in heaven by sight, or absent from Him on earth by faith, was the aim at which Paul laboured in all things. Present or absent does not affect true love in its emotions towards its object. In its thoughts, feelings, actions, and writing, it aims to keep up the loving mutual acquaintance and friendship, so that when the meeting and living together shall occur, it may be the sweeter and more real. May I thus live in respect to Him who is my soul's Beloved!

WHEN Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him *more* than his brethren, he did not answer by comparison, so as to give occasion to ill-feeling in his fellow-disciples; but he simply declared he loved his Master, and appealed to His knowledge of him as evidence of his sincerity. It is wise not to compare ourselves with others in religion, but content ourselves by a consciousness and expression of our sincere affection towards Jesus, and *so conscious* of our sincerity, that we can challenge the Divine knowledge to call it in question.

THE Apostle Thomas, when Jesus showed Himself to him in His resurrection-body, exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" Blessed is the soul which with eyes of faith can look through the *wounds*, and beneath the flesh, and see the Godhead; and blessed yet more is that soul when it can say, "*My Lord and my God!*" Thus to individuate God in Jesus, and appropriate Him to myself, is better than to say, "My angel, my world, my universe."

SUCH was the diabolical spirit of the Jew's, that they preferred *Barabbas* to Jesus. Thus it is with all who make choice of the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life, before Jesus. O, how many there are who, with the spirit of sin, like the Jews, prefer wickedness to virtue, wrong to right, the devil to Jesus! My will is to renounce everything for Him who gave Himself to death for me.

It is no disgrace to be brought before judges and magistrates, when, like Jesus and His apostles, we are brought for righteousness' sake. The Spirit of God and of glory rests upon us. Though we may be imprisoned, and die at the hands of our enemies, we are more than conquerors through Him who has loved us, and given Himself for us.

JUDAS sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver—a small sum, surely, for the “Pearl of great price,” and his only hope of heaven. But base as was this disciple, and paltry as was the money for which he betrayed his Saviour, are there not those who, more base and sordid than their patron, sell their Lord for a mess of pottage, as Esau his birthright; or even for less—a momentary indulgence in the pleasures of sin?

ALTHOUGH Jesus has ascended into the heavens, and is in His human nature no longer to be seen or heard, He has not left His people without Himself. He has come again in the Person of His Spirit. “He,” Jesus said, “shall glorify Me in the Church among Mine own, as the Father shall glorify Me in heaven among Mine own there.” “He shall take of Mine”—“of all the fulness that is in Me; of all the virtue that goeth from Me; of all the merit of My passion; of all the power of My word; of all the inexhaustible grace of My one Person”—“and show it unto you.”

BEFORE doing good Jesus did not ask, Will my *way* of doing it, or my *time* of doing it, or the *place* of doing it, or the *party* to whom it is done, meet with approval from the laws and authorities of the church? He *did* it, caring for none of these things. *Doing good* is above the restrictions and circumstances of men and churches. “To do good and to distribute forget not, for with such sacrifices *God is well pleased.*” This is enough.

JESUS was without *patron* from the world and from the church too. And he who would now venture to live as He did, would be without one too. Were He again to come on earth, and speak and live as He did before, who among the church and the world would *patronise* Him? The Pharisees would carp; the Sadducees would snarl; the doctors would disdain; the priests would go on the other side; the learned would say He was mad; the kings would laugh at Him. *Perhaps* the poor people would hear Him gladly, and the outcasts of society would cluster around Him for pity and pardon. It is one thing to have Jesus living in our midst, and another thing to have Him in *pictures*, in *theory*, and in *Scripture*.

JESUS was no *partisan*. He neither stood with Cæsar against the Jews, nor with the Jews against Cæsar; with the Pharisees against the Sadducees, nor with the Sadducees against the Pharisees. He was the Friend of all and the enemy of none. He

came into the world as the sun rises in the morning, to give light and blessing to all who came within His sphere. He was the Teacher, the Priest, the Lord, the Saviour of the *world*.

THE world calculates a man's worth by what he *has*. Jesus estimates a man by what he *is*. If he is a lover of truth, justice, and holiness as revealed by God, and acts them out in his life, though he may be as poor as Lazarus, he is a king and priest. And though he may *have* the wealth of nations, and is devoid of the virtues and graces of the Divine nature, he *is* among the impoverished of humanity. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

JESUS as readily went into the house of a publican as of a Pharisee. He conversed with the poor as freely as with the rich. He spake to the impure as to the pure, and blessed infants as well as adults. The principle of action in Him was that which was in His Father, to do good to the evil and the good. Wherever, whenever, and to whomsoever, He could bless, He blessed, spite the prejudices, customs, and laws of society around Him. Let all His people go and do likewise.

Pulpit Illustrations.

"Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."—ISAIAH xlix. 16.

WHEN we have a thing fresh in our minds, and we want to make others know that we have it close to our memory, we say we have it at our fingers' ends. I say to such an one, "I shall not forget you; I constantly recollect you; your name, and your business, and your circumstances are at my fingers' ends." Everyone understands what is meant by the expression, it is a present memorial; but the figure of speech here used is more beautiful than that. "I have thee as near to Me as if I had thee always in the palms of My hands." That by which I remember thee is most near to me. A dear friend told me that when travelling in the East, he frequently saw persons who had the portraits of their friends printed on the palms of their hands. I said to him, "But did not they wear out?" "Yes, sometimes," he said, "but very frequently they were tattooed,

marked right into the hand, and then, as long as the hand was there, there was the image of the friend, roughly drawn, of course." Oriental art is not very perfect, but there it was, drawn on the palms of the hands, so that it could be always seen. A person had never to say, "Run and fetch the portrait; run and bring me down the memorial;" he always had it present with him. So the Lord Jesus always has His people present with Him at all times. He is the Head: they are the members. The members are never far off from the head. He is the Shepherd: they are the sheep; and the careful shepherd, in time of danger, is never far from his sheep. Christ is not far from any of His people, and, therefore, His recollections of them are not difficult to be maintained. He keeps the memorial of them in His hands—present with Him. There is no fear, therefore, that He will forget them.—*Spurgeon.*

THE TRUE MOTTO OF LIFE.

LIVE while you live, the epicure would say,
 And seize the pleasures of the present day.
 Live while you live, the sacred preacher cries,
 And give to God each moment as it flies.
 Lord, in my views let both united be,
 I live in pleasure, when I live to thee.

—*Doddridge.*

SAVED TO THE UTMOST.

"Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."—*HEB. vii. 25.*

DR. CLARKE says: "He is able to save from the power, guilt, nature, and punishment of sin—to the uttermost—to all intents, degrees, and purposes; and always, and in, and through all times, places, and circumstances; for all this implied in the original word." The Dutch Bible translates the word "perfectly," the German has it "for ever," Dr. Leander Van Ess translates "complete," Berlenburg Bible "most perfectly," Catholic Bible (German) "eternally," Dr. Stier renders it "most complete." The original word seems to combine the two ideas of *continuity and utmost completeness*. Hence Jesus saves *for ever to the utmost!* But you must come unto God by Him, and keep coming all the time, which implies a complete separation from sin and an entire consecration to God. Here is full salvation to you, hnngering soul. Christ offers to you the overflowing well of salvation, thirsty heart. You are not straitened in Him, you may receive from His fulness grace for grace. Come, and be saved *for ever to the uttermost.*

THE WORD ONLY.

"Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."—MATTHEW viii. 8.

IN the International Exhibition of 1862 were two pictures which I think I shall never forget. The first was called, "Waiting for the Verdict." Standing at the door of a room where a trial was going on, there was a little gathering of people. A woman—oh, what agony was in her look!—and a dear little child lying against her asleep; another, who looked like the grandmother, holding the youngest child; the grandfather, with one hand fallen down between his legs, the other covering his face, from which the big tears were rolling; the dog looking up and wondering; the elder sister standing there against the door, all anxiety. What meant it all? Before the bar in that court of justice the father was standing, and they were "waiting for the verdict."

There was a second picture. The same people standing at the same place, only one is among them we did not see before. A man is sitting on the bench, his wife, with joyful look, embracing him; the dog licking his hand; the grandmother, with eyes swollen with weeping, only they are tears of joy now, holding up a dear little child for a kiss from the father, who a few minutes before had been standing before that bar. Why are they all so changed? Why joy where there was sorrow?—happiness where there was misery? A "word only" had done it all. "Not guilty," "The Acquittal."

Does not this remind us of a bar before which we must stand?—Judge before whom we must appear? We shall be "waiting for the verdict;" the "word only" of Jesus will have power to fix our state for ever—"Come;" "Depart."—W. H. W.

THE SLUGGARD INSTRUCTED.

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest."—PROVERBS vi. 6-8.

MOST modern entomologists have denied that ants store up corn, and have suggested that the resemblance of the *pupa*, or chrysalis of that insect, to a grain of wheat was the foundation of the supposed error. It has been further remarked that Solomon's language might merely mean that the ant gathered food when food was plentiful—in fact, "made hay while the sun shone."

But Colonel Sykes discovered at Poona, in India, a species of ant which stores up the seeds of a kind of millet; and a correspondent of the *Athenæum* states, in a recent number of that

journal, that a pile of wheat having been left on a threshing-floor in the island of Zante, it was subsequently found to have been plundered by ants. On one of the nests of these little pilferers being opened, "two good-sized tin cansful of grain" were discovered in it.

The observations of Israel's royal naturalist are thus substantially confirmed.—W. H. G.

THE LOOSENED TONGUE.

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."—MATTHEW xii. 34.

THERE was a king of Lydia in olden times, I think his name was Cræsus, who had a son who had the misfortune to be totally dumb. In silence his childhood and boyhood passed into youth; the prince dwelt in the splendid court of his father, unable to utter a word. Then came dreadful misfortunes. The Persians fought the Lydians, and Cræsus was overthrown. A soldier was about to kill the unhappy monarch, of whose rank he was not aware, before the eyes of his son; when in that moment of horror, fear and love did what human skill had not done. "Spare him; he is the king!" cried the prince. The string which tied his tongue had burst, from his effort to save his father.

If we were as anxious to snatch others from eternal death as this poor prince was to save his father, we should find that we too could speak; we should no longer be silent and dumb on the subject of heaven and hell.—A. L. O. E.

GIVING TO THE POOR.

"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will He pay him again."—PROV. xix. 17.

A CERTAIN Jew, upon reading this text, resolved to try whether God would be as good as His word: thereupon gave all that he had, but two pieces of silver, to the poor, and then waited and expected to see it come again. But being not presently answered in that expectation grew angry, and went up to Jerusalem to expostulate with God for not performing His promise. And going on his way, he found two men engaged in a quarrel about a stone, that both walking together had found in the way, and so had both equal right to it; but it being but one, and not capable of being divided, they could not both enjoy. And, therefore, to make them friends, he having two pieces of silver, doth upon contract divide them betwixt the contenders, and hath the stone in exchange for them. Having it, he goes on his journey, and coming to Jerusalem, shows it to a goldsmith,

who tells him that it was a jewel of great value, being a stone fallen and lost out of the high-priest's ephod, to whom if he carried it he would certainly receive a great reward. He did so, and accordingly it proved. The high-priest took it of him, gave him a great reward, and reproved him for questioning the truth of God's promises, bidding him trust God the next time.—*Dr. Hammond.*

INCONSTANCY.

HE now despises what he late did crave,
And what he last neglected now would have;
He fluctuates, and flies from that to this,
And his whole life a contradiction is.—*Horace.*

Such are the motions of th' inconstant soul,
As are the days and weather fair or foul.—*Ibid.*

Like tops with leathern thongs we're whipped about.—*Ibid.*

Day after day we see men toil to find
Some secret solace to an anxious mind.
Shifting from place to place, if here or there,
They might set down the burthen of their care.—*Ibid.*

SHORTNESS OF TIME.

"But this I say, brethren, the time is short."—1 Cor. vii. 29.

AN ancient poet, unreasonably discontented at the present state of things, which his system of opinions obliged him to represent in its worst form, has observed of the earth, "That its greater part is covered by the uninhabitable ocean; that of the rest, some is encumbered with naked mountains, and some lost under barren sands; some scorched with unintermitted heat, and some petrified with perpetual frost; so that only a few regions remain for the production of fruits, the pasture of cattle, and the accommodation of man."

The same observation may be transferred to the time allotted us on earth. When we have deducted all that is absorbed in sleep, all that is inevitably appropriated to the demands of nature, or irresistibly engrossed by the tyranny of custom; all that passes in regulating the superficial decorations of life, or is given up in the reciprocations of civility to the disposal of others; all that is torn from us by the violence of disease, or stolen imperceptibly away by lassitude and languor; we shall find that part of our duration very small of which we can truly call ourselves masters, or which we can spend wholly at our *own choice.*

Anecdotes of Preachers.

BISHOP BUTLER'S HABITS AND MANNERS.—Bishop Butler lived in a most frugal and simple manner, and spent his income in the support of public and private charities. He once invited a man of fortune to dine with him, and appointed a time. When the guest came, there was a simple joint and a pudding. The bishop apologised for the plain fare, and said it was his way of living; "that he had been long disgusted with the fashionable expense of time and money in entertainments, and was determined that it should receive no countenance from his example." So far was he from showing the slightest favouritism, that one of his nephews once exclaimed, "Methinks, my lord, it is a misfortune to be related to you." One day a gentleman called on him to lay before him the details of some projected benevolent institution. The bishop highly approved of the object, and, calling his steward, he asked how much money he then had in his possession. The answer was, "Five hundred pounds, my lord." "Five hundred pounds!" exclaimed his master; "what a shame for a bishop to have so much money! Give it all to this gentleman to his charitable plan." He died worth less than half a year's income.

A BATCH of old women, on their way home after the conclusion of the service, were overheard discussing the merits of the several preachers who had that day addressed them from the tent. "Leeze me abune them a'," said one of the company, who had waxed warm in the discussion, "for you auld clear-headed (bald) man, that said, 'Raphael sings an' Gabriel strikes his goolden harp, an' a' the angels clap their wings wi' joy.' O but it was gran', it just put me in min' o' our geese at Dunjar when they turn their nebs to the south, an' clap their wings when they see the rain's comin' after lang drooth." —*Dean Ramsey's Reminiscences.*

A CLERGYMAN wished to dissuade his daughter from any thoughts of matrimony. "She who marries does well," said he; "but she who does not marry does better." "My father," she answered meekly, "I am content with doing well; let her do better who can."

SYDNEY SMITH, passing through a back street behind St. Paul's, heard two women abusing each other from opposite houses. "They will never agree," said the wit, "they argue from different premises."

Books.

The Methodist Memorial. By CHARLES ATMORE. London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co.—This is the republication of a volume long out of print. It gives an "impartial sketch of the lives and characters of the preachers who have departed this life since the commencement of the work of God among the people called Methodists, late in connection with the Rev. John Wesley, drawn from the most authentic sources, and disposed in alphabetical order." There is also an introduction giving "a brief account of the state of religion from the earliest ages, and a concise history of Methodism." Besides this there is "an original memoir of the author, and notices of some of his contemporaries." This *Memorial* comes down as far as 1801. It would have been a great improvement had the editor given an alphabetical list of the names either at the beginning or the end of the book. We are glad to see this *Memorial* re-published. It is well to keep before the Methodist churches the lives of the men who bore the burden and heat of the day. To read those lives exerts a healthy and powerful stimulus on the labourers of the present day. We trust this volume will be in great demand, and do great good wherever it goes.—*The Biblical Museum.* By J. C. GRAY. London: E. Stock.—We called attention to the first volume of this work in January number of the *Lay Preacher*. What we then said of that we can repeat about this, which includes the Gospels of Luke and John. It is a very useful work to all who are engaged in teaching and expounding the Word of God.—*Starting in Life*, by JOHN CLIFFORD, M.A., LL.B., is the name of a small

work published by Mr. Stock. It is as the title-page says, "familiar talks with young people;" and the "young people" who read and observe what is said by the author, will, we are sure, be wiser in head and life. We recommend it as a good book for a small present to a young friend.—*The Conqueror's Palm.* By the Rev. C. STOCKDALE. Second Edition. London: G. Lamb, 6, Sutton-street, Commercial-road.—This is a very interesting and useful memorial of Mrs. Stockdale. She was cut off rather suddenly, but not without witnessing for Jesus in a life of holiness, and in a death of gracious triumph.—*A Manual of Missionary Facts and Principles*, for the use of young people and Bible-classes, by a Retired Missionary, contains some very useful information in regard to the mission cause and its operations. It is published by John Snow & Co., Paternoster-row.—*The Exposition* of some of the Prevailing Causes which prevent the Spiritual Prosperity of Christian Churches, and the Success of the Gospel Ministry. By the Rev. T. H. WALKER. Author of the "Down-hill of Life," &c. London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.—There are some stirring and useful things in this little book. We wish for it a wide circulation and extensive usefulness.—*City-road Chapel, London, and its Associations*—Historical, Biographical, and Memorial. By G. J. STREVENSON, publisher, 54, Paternoster-row.—This is Part I. of a number of which the volume is to be made. We have read this part with considerable interest and pleasure. We trust that the author will be greatly encouraged by a large demand for his work.



THE LAY PREACHER.

Preaching as God Bids.

"Preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."—JONAH iii. 2.

THESE are the words which the Lord spake to Jonah when for the second time He commissioned him to go to Nineveh, and warn it of the impending danger to which its sins had exposed it.

They are words which may form the basis for a few observations upon *preaching as God bids*.

They are the words of the Master to His servants; the words of the King to His ambassadors. They demand reverent attention and prompt observance. The preacher who obeys this injunction is faithful and true to his vocation, and will have the approval of his Lord now as well as His reward when his work is done.

I. The command is, "*Preach*," not read; not memorise and repeat. These are not to preach. To preach is to proclaim, to publish, to declare a message, whatever its nature, which has been previously received in its principles of truth from the Master Himself in the Revelation that He has given. Jonah preached when to the doomed inhabitants of Nineveh he "cried," "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Imagine Jonah *reading* this message as he went along the thronged streets and thoroughfares of the city!

John the Baptist preached when, as the herald of our Lord, he proclaimed to the crowds which rushed from Jerusalem into the wilderness to hear him, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus Christ preached when on the mount, or by the wayside, or in the village streets, or in the synagogue, or from the ship's deck, He proclaimed the things "new and old" concerning His kingdom. Peter preached when at the Pentecost he proclaimed to the assembled thousands the Messiah in His Divinity, death, and resurrection. Paul preached when on Mars' Hill he proclaimed those sublime truths concerning God's creative, providential, redeeming, and saving goodness. Luther preached when by his proclamation of justification by faith he stirred Popery to its deepest depths, and moved her to fury against the glorious truth. Knox preached when he, with soul-vehemence, denounced the dogmas of Romanism, and by the declaration of the Gospel contributed so much to the Scottish Reformation. Wesley and Whitfield preached when in the fields, and in the towns and cities, they proclaimed the truths which aroused a sleepy church into religious action, and a profligate nation to godly repentance.

Is it within the compass of the imagination to picture these men *reading* their messages and the same results following? It were easier to imagine a doctor reading to his patient the symptoms of his disease, or a lawyer reading counsel to his client, or a man reading to his neighbour the fact that his house was on fire, than to imagine these men, or any similarly inspired and engaged in their work, *reading* their sermons.

We know that much has been said in favour of reading sermons from the human side of the question; but we never yet heard a word uttered from the Divine side of the subject. God never instituted reading sermons, either by

command or intimation or example. While God says, by command, by example in Himself, and in all whom He most signally owns, "*Preach*," we have no confidence in the theory and example which says, "*Read*."

II. And then as to the matter and authority. "Preach the *preaching* that I bid thee." That is, Preach what I tell thee. So Jonah was not to go and tell the Ninevites what *he* thought and felt about them, or what his wife and friends or fellow-prophets thought; but he was to confine himself simply to the message which God gave him.

Thus should preachers in our day. They should come with a *message from God* unto the people. "Thus saith the Lord" should be the preface with which they introduce every theme. If they cannot do this, the people may justly ask, "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are ye?" They may ask again, "Who hath made you lords and judges of our faith? Speak to us the word of the Lord, and we will hear; but your own words we will not hear."

There is, we fear, too much divergence in our day among preachers from the preaching which God bids. There is too much preaching of what *I think*, what *I imagine*, what *I read*; too much preaching of what is learned in schools and colleges and creeds and books; too much preaching of what science and philosophy and logic and nature reveal; too much preaching of what the people wish, ask for, and chimes in with their mental predilections, social habits, and personal sins.

There is a loud call for the preaching which God bids. God Himself calls for it. The woes, miseries, sins, errors, and ignorance of our times call for it. "Preach the preaching which God bids you," is the voice which issues from all these upon the soul of everyone sent forth by God to be His Gospel messenger. If you do not this, you are not *His* messenger. You may be your own or the churches', but you are not *His*.

The preaching which He bids is made plain to you in His Word. "Search the Scriptures," and you shall find "all the words of this life" or Gospel which He bids you declare. Tell nothing to the people which you cannot in one way or other gather from His Word. Let the Word of the Lord be the light which illuminates all, the hand which signs all, the seal which stamps all. "It is not I that speak, but the Lord that speaketh through me. I am the instrument, God is the player. I am the voice, God is the speaker. I am the trumpet, God gives the certain sound." Such should be the sentiment felt and manifest in every preacher of Christ.

"Preach the preaching that I bid thee." Do it promptly, do it simply, do it faithfully, do it earnestly, do it prayerfully, do it believably, do it constantly, do it everywhere, do it with love in thy heart, and the judgment in thy view; do it irrespective of men's frowns or smiles, men's good words or bad; do it at the risk of popularity, greatness, or meanness. God bids thee; that is thine authority, thy defence and guarantee. If men say thou art beside thyself, it is for God. If they say thou art a fool, it is for God. If they mock, or jeer, or falsely accuse, or imprison, or say thou art against science and learning, and fashion and custom, it is nothing to thee. That is not thy business. Preach as God bids thee, and leave Him and men to settle these discrepancies. Thou art God's servant, and to Him thou standest or fallest. With Him is thy honour or thy shame, thy reward or thy punishment. Preach the preaching that He bids thee, and thou hast done thy duty, and shalt not lose thy reward.

It is interesting to observe how the faithful prophets and apostles adhered to this feature of their work. Kings and people, priests and congregations, all were subordinated to the authority of Jehovah, under which they preached. *Houses full of gold and silver as bribes; the presence of*

royalty in all its grandeur and power; the threats of infuriated majesty; the dungeon, the fiery furnace, the den, the prison-house, poverty, enslavement, confiscation, and, in fine, every form of woe and punishment, could not move them from their fidelity in preaching the preaching that God bid them. Their responsibility to Him, His voice of command sounding in their consciousness, their allegiance to His throne and law, were more to them than all else which men, the world, devils, or self could threaten or promise. "We cannot but speak the word which the Lord has given us. We must obey God rather than man. We speak what we have seen and heard. We are servants of the Great Master, and must do as He bids us. We are ambassadors of the Glorious King, and we must execute His purposes and declare His will as He has laid them before us. To Him we stand or fall; and if the world or the Church gnash its teeth upon us, and even kill us with stones, as it did Stephen, or burn us at the stake as it did some of the Reformers, we cannot do otherwise than preach the preaching that God bids us."

Such are the motives which influenced those preaching heroes of ancient times, and such should be the motives to influence all God-sent preachers of the Gospel in our days. It is these motives which make heroes in the preaching world, and which make their words to be as fire on the sun-dried heath, or as a two-edged sword in the hand of the Spirit Almighty.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD.—The historian tells us that when Antigonus overheard his soldiers reckoning how many their enemies were, and so discouraging one another, he suddenly stepped in among them with this question, "How many do you reckon me for?" Discouraged souls, how many do you reckon the Lord for?—*Flavel*.

Hints to Bible Students.

BY REV. J. HAMILTON, D.D.

NEAR the Franconia Mountains, in America, there died a very aged man in August, 1852. Shrewd, vigorous, and sturdy, he lived without God in the world fourscore and four years—a grasping, passionate, and domineering man, a thorough-going worldling. But the sudden death of an old acquaintance startled him. He felt that it was time for himself to get ready, and by an exertion almost incredible, he learned to read the Testament. “Yes, it was hard work,” as he said to a friend. “At my time of life to begin with the letters and learn to read, was hard work. Sometimes I could not make out the sense. But I would cry to the Almighty to help me, and then I would try again, and He would help me to find it out. So that now I have read the Testament through eight times, and here I am in the epistles of Peter the ninth time; and oh!” he added, with streaming eyes, “it is glory and praise in my heart.” He was a sagacious and energetic old man, and, as he said himself, “I wanted a religion that should be good and strong, and that would keep by me, and help me when I came to die. So I cried to the Almighty, and He gave me a heart for the blessed Testament. I found out how to read it, and then I read in it that Jesus Christ made the world, and the rivers, and the mountains. And then I began to pray to Him that He would give me a new heart; and He gave it to me. And I read, that when He lived on earth, He healed the sick and the blind, and was good to the poor; and then I knew that He would be kind to me; and He forgave me, and gave me a new heart.” It was quite true. The change on his harsh and rugged nature was very wonderful; and as he said to the great American statesman who was his brother-in-law, “I have had done for me, Daniel, what neither you nor all the great men in the world could do for me; I have got a new heart.” And, returning to his home, Mr. Webster said, “Wonderful things happen in this world, and one of them is, that John Colby has become a Christian.”

When the reader is prompted by such a powerful motive, the Bible is sure to be abundantly interesting, and it is hardly needful to give rules for its profitable perusal. But if we do not mistake, most well-disposed persons wish that they carried to the Book a warmer enthusiasm, and sat down to it with a keener relish. They know its Divine authority. They feel how solemn is its *claim* on their attention. They would not be happy to let days or weeks pass without a portion read. And yet they regret that

their Bible-reading is so mechanical ; that it is so often a tedium and a task-work ; and altogether they feel guilty and uncomfortable at their treatment of the Word of God.

We may assume that it is not for want of intrinsic interest or importance, that the Bible proves dull or distasteful to any reader. And for the sake of those who would like to enjoy it more, we would offer a few plain suggestions.

1. The very copy of the Bible which you use is a matter of some moment. A man of letters will read our English epic in the smallest size and sorriest type, rather than not read it at all ; but if he possess the Bard of Paradise in a worthy garb—if his edition be a learned luxury—a delight for the eyes to look upon, he will be ready to return to it, and by casual peeps as well as stated perusals, he will be apt to grow mighty in Milton. So with the Jews, ancient and modern. Their transcripts of the Law are predigies of penmanship, and apart from all other value, would be worth collecting as caligraphic wonders. In like manner, as one means of enhancing the value of the Book, would it not be well to get an attractive copy ? an edition so fair and bright, that its very beauty would coax you to return, and, instead of straining your eyes over blurred and blotted columns, the clear and expressive type, like the recitation of an articulate speaker, would “give the sense, and cause you to understand the reading.”

2. But in order to understand the meaning, you must take advantage of every help. There is a Geography of the Bible—an Archæology of the Bible—a Natural History of the Bible ; and it is ignorance of these which makes many portions so insipid. For example, the Acts of the Apostles read without a map, even if they convey some lessons to the heart, must remain a chaos in the memory. But if, instead of its starting-points and stations all merging in one another—if instead of fancying Corinth and Colosse both towns of Greece, and Antioch and Athens adjacent villages—if the route of the Apostle resolve into geographical distinctness, it will not only be intensely interesting to follow him from place to place, and mark the successive stations where the Gospel was planted, but it will materially enliven your perusal of the Epistles, when you think of the localities where the Roman, Corinthian, Philippian, and Thessalonian converts dwelt—the firstfruits of European heathendom ; or when you call up the circumstances connected with the Galatian, Ephesian, and Colossian Churches—half Hebrew, half Hellenist. In like manner some knowledge of Assyrian and Medo-Persian history is essential to a full command of the Old Testament prophecies ; and not only are Amos and Obadiah new books when read among the forsaken rock-cyries of Petra, but

Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and many portions of the larger prophets are full of enigmas, the solutions of which have only lately been dug from under the earth-mounds of Mesopotamia. Even the knowledge of an Eastern custom is instant light on the corresponding fact or saying. When you see a Syrian flock following the shepherd, and answering to his call, you remember, "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me;" and when you see the herdsman bringing home to the village at the close of day the oxen and asses with which he was entrusted, and once he is within the gate leaving them to themselves, for he knows that they will find their own way through the streets, and all seek their respective stables—you understand Isaiah's words, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Were the climate, the seasons, and the husbandry of the Holy Land carefully noted by some competent observer, they would throw fresh light on many a Scripture; and even the little which is known of its Natural History has dispelled many a difficulty. In the siege of Samaria, we are told that "an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver," and many have wondered why this last should be sold at all: but when we know that it is the bulbous root of the Star of Bethlehem which got this name, and which was often used for food, the wonder ceases. People used to think the coneys of Solomon the same as our rabbits, which are indeed "a feeble folk," but which do not "make their houses in the rock." Now that the coney is ascertained to be the Daman or Hyrax—a shy defenceless creature, which lurks among the cliffs of the mountains, and darts into its den at the least approach of danger—the words of Agur acquire their full significance.

3. This leads us to mention another Bible-help, which we thing you will find very valuable. Would it not be good for every one to keep for himself a little store-house of Bible-illustration? Every book that elucidates Scripture is useful; but to each person the most serviceable of all commentaries would be one of his own compiling. Were any one to get an interleaved Bible, or still better, perhaps, a blank-paper book; and whenever, in reading a theological treatise, or a work of Eastern travel, or in listening to a sermon, he found a dark saying expounded, or a trite saying happily applied, he treasured it up; his casket would soon fill with pearls of great price. Even although, as is usually the fate of such experiments—even although the record were imperfectly kept up, its value would be unspeakable. Every text thus illustrated *becomes in its turn* an illustration; not only an enlightened

surface, but a luminous source—a torch to a hundred parallels—a candle to all the context. And although you never made more than a few dozen entries in such a book, they would shed more meaning over the Bible than days of careless and cursory perusal; and when you had nearly forgotten all other books and sermons, the biographical incidents, the theological elucidations, the illustrative maxims and memorabilia, which you had thus garnered up, would survive, as interesting and instructive as ever.

4. The Bible, as we have already had occasion to mention, is, in one aspect, a book, and in another aspect, a library. It has both unity and variety. It is all alike the Word of God, and yet it is really made up of six-and-sixty volumes. The bouquet is composed of many flowers, but all of them gathered in the conservatory of Heaven. The bundle contains many spices, aloes, myrrh, and cassia, as well as mint and cummin—proverbs as well as gospels, chronicles as well as psalms—some of them more exquisite, and some of them more homely, but all of them from God; and all of them, in their collectiveness, profitable for doctrine or reproof, for correction or instruction, and combining to furnish for every good work the man of God. And where there is such diversity, there will be corresponding affinities; and without any disparagement to the rest, every reader will find a prevailing attraction to some given portion. The poet is the inheritor of nature. He enjoys it all, and he despises none of it; but there is some form or presentation in which he specially delights. Crabbe loved the low sandy flats of the Suffolk coast, and Wordsworth the hills of Cumberland. Davy forgot philosophy and became a little child among granite peaks, which spoke of his native Penzance; and Scott declared that he should die if he did not once a-year inhale the heather. Each had his turn, and for every taste the Creator had provided a counterpart. And so the believer inherits the Bible. The record of his Father's love is all his own. But though it is the same God who gives it all, and though it is the same Saviour whom it all reveals, there are diversities of tastes; and to meet these tastes there are diversities of adaptations. Leighton basks in the warm evening sunshine of Peter, and Luther grows electric with the yearning affection and evangelistic ardour of Paul. With the Sermon on the Mount and the hortatory epistles for their topic, the English Reformers sought to foster in their hearers a practical piety; whilst, coeval with the Riddleys and Latimers, the Donns and the Hammonds of England, the North gave birth to men like Knox, and Melville, and Bruce—men who took their cue from the old Hebrew prophets, and their text from the *Kings* or the *Judges*—a lion-bearding, image-

breaking race, full of their own sublime purpose, which out of a race of swordsmen and robbers, sought to make a covenanted nation—and in carrying that purpose as fearless of man as they were faithful to their God. And so, it is not only possible, but we might almost say desirable, that each Bible-book had its own student—one who found in it a special pleasure, and who round it as a nucleus aggregated materials from the rest. But it is still more needful alongside of any partial study like this, to secure a comprehensive knowledge of the Scriptures complete. No single book can make a Bible, just as no one truth can make a full revelation. It is, therefore, by comparing Scripture with Scripture—by reading Hebrews in the light of Leviticus, by supplementing Matthew's parables with John's conversations—by comparing the justifying righteousness of Romans with the justifying faith of Galatians, and both together with the faith-justifying works of James, that our creed will attain symmetry and system, and like an arch, which is not all pier or all keystone, but which consists of many courses fitly framed together, our faith—self-consistent and self-sustaining—will not readily break down. The Gospel—the great faithful saying, is the keystone; but on that grand central truth—the Cross of Christ, God Manifest, Love Incarnate, the Mediator at once human and Divine—on that great keystone, from where Genesis opens to where the Apocalypse closes, every successive instalment has a purchase and puts forth a strengthening pressure. And if it add to your intelligence to know the special purport of every Bible-book; if it be creditable and scholar-like to be able to tell, off-hand, how Second Samuel relates the reign of David, and how Second John is an apostolic counsel to a Christian lady; you will only attain a thorough Bible mastery, you will then only be mighty in the Scriptures, when you know their respective contributions to the cardinal Revelation, and can point out that testimony concerning Jesus which is the essence of them all.

(To be concluded.)



KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.—O! when I am looking heavenwards, and gazing towards the inaccessible light, and aspiring after the knowledge of God, and find my soul so dark and distant that I am ready to say, "I know not God: He is above me—quite out of my reach,"—methinks I could willingly exchange all the other knowledge I have for one glimpse more of the knowledge of God and of the life to come."—*Baxter.*

Inquiring after Christ.

A SERMON BY THE REV. JACOB TURVEY (OF TODMORDEN).

"Oh that I knew where I might find Him; that I might come even to His seat. I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments."—JOB xxiii. 3, 4.

WHEN Job uttered these words he was not rolling in riches or flushed with health, or surrounded by firm and faithful friends—he was the subject of sorrow and of disquietude, arising from the loss of his property, his children, and his health, and from the censure and suspicion of his professed friends. Although Job was a righteous man, yet his way through life was dark and rough, thorny and round about, and very much up-hill. (Read xix. 6-21.) In the second verse of this chapter, from which our text is selected, he says, "Even to-day is my complaint bitter; my stroke is heavier than my groaning;" intimating that he suffered more than he was wishful to express. Some people are apt to make too much of their sorrows, &c.; not so Job—"My stroke is heavier than my groaning." All around him, and all within him, and all before him, seemed to be wrapped in the clouds of thick darkness; and the God of his life and the Saviour of his soul seemed to be absent and out of his sight. "Behold I go forward," says he, "but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him" (verses 8, 9). And then, like a traveller without a guide, or like a prodigal without a home, or like a child without his father, he cries out in the bitterness of his soul, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him," &c.

In order to make our subject as widely useful as we can, we shall take the words of the text as suitable to the penitent sinner, the returning backslider, and the troubled believer.

I. *These words are suitable to the broken-hearted penitent.* If there is any sight on earth more pleasing than another to the angels of God, and to the souls of the pious, and to the Saviour of the world, it is that of a man weeping for his sins, and praying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The penitent has been led by the Holy Ghost to reflect on the evil of his thoughts, of his tempers, of his words, of his bad example, and of his bad practices. His soul, as the consequence, is agitated with godly sorrow, pierced by self-accusations, and arrested with fears, which make him tremble on the verge of perdition. *His prospect as to the shroud, the coffin, the grave, and the dread realities of eternity, is black and terrific.* His language is, "Oh

wretched man that I am ! I am one of the greatest rebels that ever lived ; I have fought against God ; I have rejected Christ ; I have grieved the Holy Spirit ; I have slighted the Bible ; I have caused my relatives and friends many an hour's sorrow and anxiety ; I have led others away from that which is good ; I have walked in the ways of my own heart and in the sight of my own eyes ; as the result, I am wretched beyond description ; I hear the loud thunders of the law I have broken ; I see the glittering sword of justice uplifted and flashing with fury in my face ; I see hell and destruction moving to meet me ; the arrows of the Almighty are sticking fast in me ; the pains of hell have got hold upon me ; I find trouble and sorrow. " Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? " I am a sheep without a shepherd ; I am an orphan without a friend ; I am a creature without a God ; I am a sinner without a Saviour ; " Oh that I knew where I might find Him. " I have heard, says the penitent, that Jesus has said, " Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out ; " that He has said, " Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest ; " that He said, " Come, now, and let us reason together : though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. " " Oh that I knew where I might find Him ; that I might come even to His seat. " I have heard that His seat does not burn with fire ; that His seat is not covered with storm and tempest, with thunder and lightning, with blackness and darkness, but with the melting rays of heavenly light, and with the blessed beams of bleeding love. Oh " that I could come even to His seat ; *I would order my cause before Him ;* " I would tell Him, if possible, how guilty I am ; how vile I am ; how wretched I am ; how helpless I am ; how poor I am ; how diseased I am ; how near hell-fire I am ; *I would " fill my mouth with arguments. "* Were He to tell me that I am guilty, I would tell Him that He is exalted to give me pardon ; were he to say to me that I am lost, I would tell Him that He came to seek and to save that which is lost ; were He to say that I am polluted, I would tell Him that He shed His blood to cleanse and keep me clean ; were He to say that I am full of wounds and bruises, I would tell Him that He is the wise and infallible Physician ; were He to say that I am ragged, I would tell Him that He has the robe of righteousness, the garments of salvation. *Would He upbraid me ? would He reject me ?* would He refuse to listen to me ? would He refuse to receive me, and spurn me away from His presence ? would He plead against me with His great power ? *No,* says Mary Magdalene, freed from seven devils. *No,* says Saul of Tarsus, down on his knees and saying, " Lord,

what wouldst Thou have me to do?" *No*, says the dying thief, snatched from the slippery borders of hell and damnation, and in his flight to paradise. *No*, says Job, in the chapter from which our text is selected; but "He would put strength in me." This is what the penitent needs—*strength*, the strength of faith, the strength of truth, the strength of joy, the strength of grace. "He would put strength in me."

II. *The words of our text are suited to the poor and wretched backslider, who is now made willing to return to the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul.* Oh, says the backslider, what an alteration have I seen. My profession is done with—my lamp is gone out—my liberty is lost—my soul is now in chains, in rags, and in wretchedness. *Oh that it were with me as it was in days and months that are passed; as it was* when the candle of the Lord shone upon me, and when by His light I walked through darkness. *As it was* when first I heard His sweet melodious voice, saying, "Thy sins, which were many, are all forgiven thee." *As it was* when by His power I leaped over walls of difficulty, and ran through troops of enemies. *As it was* when I was regularly at the house of God. Then, in the multitude of my thoughts within me, the comforts of the Holy Ghost delighted my soul: then I could smile at Satan's rage, and face a frowning world; then I could say, "This people shall be my people, and their God my God;" then I could say, "Come, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul;" then I could say, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain":—

"Yonder's my house and portion fair;
My treasure and my heart are there,
And my abiding home.
For me my elder brethren stay,
And angels beckon me away,
And Jesus bids me come."

Alas for me! my fine gold has become dim—the flesh has prevailed—the world has succeeded—Satan has triumphed over me—I have shown the folly of a fool—I have acted the part of a rebel—I have manifested the depravity of a devil—I have thrown my pardon back in the face of God the Father—I have *been behind* the cross, and clenched afresh the nails, and opened afresh the Saviour's wounds—I have resisted the mighty operations of the Holy Ghost—I have driven away ministering angels—I have stabbed the cause of religion—I have disappointed the expectation of the church—I have been proof against the prayers of my relatives and the expostulations of ministers—I have thrown down the family altar—I have cast away my Bible—and, therefore, I have exposed myself to the dark, deep gulf of hell. In vain do the pious say to me now, "Sing us one of

the Lord's songs." How can I sing the Lord's songs in a strange land? My companions are strange—my sensations are strange—my spiritual condition is altogether strange—my heart is hard—my soul is frozen—my peace is fled—my hope is gone—my cup of joy is smashed in pieces—my harp of praise is now hanging rusty on the willows of unbelief, and now I sit down and weep an absent God. "Oh that I knew where I might find Him; that I might come even to His seat." I have been at His seat many a time; I used to sit with Christ in heavenly places; and many a time I have been led to say—

"My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this,
And sit and sing herself away
To everlasting bliss."

But alas! alas! I have forfeited my position, I have lost my seat in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Oh that I could once more come to His seat; "I would order my cause before Him." I would tell him how ungrateful I have been, how treacherously I have acted. I would "fill my mouth with arguments." Were He to tell me that I have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewn out to myself cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water, I would tell Him that He has invited me to living waters; that He said, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Were He to tell me that I am twice dead, and near the death that never, never dies, I would tell Him that He is the Prince and Giver of Life, and that He came into the world that I might have life, and have it more abundantly. Were He to tell me I have gone astray, I would remind Him that He has invited me to return—"Return, ye backsliding children, for I am merciful, and I will not keep anger for ever." I would use one argument after another; *in fact*, I would "fill my mouth with arguments." And would He turn a deaf ear to my pleading? would He make light of my cause? would He flash His sword in my face? would He plead against me with His great power? *No*, says poor Peter, going out and weeping bitterly. *No*, says Job, but "He would put strength in me." This is what I need. The Philistines of hell have left me blind, and shorn me of all the locks of my strength; but my gracious, loving Lord will again put strength in me.

III. *These words of our text are likewise suited to the Christian in the dark and cloudy day.* The Christian is not always favoured with sunny skies, or with summer days, or with flowery paths, or with firm and faithful friends; he very often has to do with clouds and with darkness, and with the deep waters of sorrow, *and with the pelting storms of opposition, and with one sad loss*

after another. He knows what it is, perhaps, to suffer the loss of his health, and the loss of children, and the loss of wife, and the loss of trade, and the loss of property, and the loss of true and real friendship; and therefore, in some instances, he has to battle with poverty, instead of plenty; with sorrow, instead of joy; with ill-will, instead of good-will; with frowns, instead of smiles; with foes, instead of friends; with evil report, instead of good report; with opposition, instead of encouragement; and perhaps, as the consequence, his confidence in the equity of God's providence is greatly shaken; his hope in Bible promises may be well-nigh gone, and the eye of his faith may be almost blinded, so that he cannot see the God of his hope and the Saviour of his soul walking on the dashing waves and rolling billows of tribulation. This being the case, he cries out in the bitterness of his soul, "Oh that God my Saviour would make haste to help me! oh that He would disclose His lovely face! oh that I knew where I might find Him!" To his fellow-Christians he says, "Have you seen Him whom my soul loveth? 'Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat. I would order my cause before Him.' I would tell Him how I am tempted; how I am ill-treated; how the winds whistle around me, and how the waters are rolling over me. I would remind Him of the words on which He has caused me to hope; I would tell Him of one promise after another, and I would use these promises as arguments. Would He pass on, and take no notice of me? would He deny me His sympathy and help? would He roll the thunder of His wrath in my ears? would He dart the lightning of His majesty in my face?" "No," says one, "I was brought low, and He helped me." "No," says Job, "but He would put strength in me." "Most gladly," said Paul, "will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. When I am weak, then am I strong. I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." While the Christian is thus engaged in musing on the promises and power of his loving Lord, the clouds are dispersed and the shadows fly, and the glory of the Lord rises upon him. Then, with a glad soul and free, he says—

"The watery deep I pass,
With Jesus in my view;
And through the howling wilderness,
My way pursue."

Are any of you broken-hearted penitents? Have any of you lost your religion? Are any of you who have taken upon yourselves the profession of religion enveloped in clouds, &c.; and are you taking up the language of the text, "Oh that I knew where I might find him," &c.?

IV. *For your encouragement, allow me to remind you of some who have sought and found the Lord, and of the methods which they adopted.*

1. *Some have sought and found the Lord in the prayerful reading of the Bible.* The Bible is full of Christ. Here the image of Christ is reflected; the will of Christ is revealed; the promises of Christ are written; the invitations of Christ are recorded; some of the prayers of Christ are embodied; and the love, and grace, and goodwill of Christ are set forth as with a sunbeam. And therefore it is the privilege of all those who are prayerfully and believingly in pursuit of Christ to find Him in the perusal of this blessed Book of books. Many a poor, weeping, trembling sinner, while perusing and pondering on these everlasting lines in relation to Christ, to His bloody crucifixion, and to His bleeding cross, has had his heart melted, and thrilled, and transformed. There and then the Holy Ghost laid hold of the veil on his eyes, and, taking it away, He rent it from top to bottom, and the sinner, seeing Jesus as bleeding and dying for him, cried out—

“See there my Lord upon the tree,
I hear, I feel He died for me.”

And there and then, in the rapture of the full assurance of faith, he exclaimed—

“I have found the Pearl of greatest price,
My soul doth sing for joy,
And sing I must, a Christ I have,
And what a Christ have I!”

This grand old Book, the Bible, then, is the Book for you who are saying within yourselves, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him,” &c. *It is true*, you may look into the writings of Blackstone in order to know how to save your property, or into the writings of medical men in order to know how to save your health, and into the writings of wise and good men to know how to save your reputation, but if you would know how, and when, and where you may find Jesus, you must come to the Scriptures. “Search the Scriptures,” said the Saviour, “for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.” Soon after a certain ecclesiastic wrote a book against the Pentateuch, a sceptic said to a plain Christian man in Yorkshire, “There’s an extinguisher put on your Bible now.” “Ah,” said the good man, “we have many extinguishers put on our Bible, but they have all proved themselves to be wooden extinguishers; the light of the Bible has burnt right through them.” Tom Paine, Voltaire, and others, have placed their wooden extinguishers on the Bible, but the heavenly fire of the holy truth has burnt right through them, and now the light *shines* brighter than ever.

2. *Some have sought and found the Lord in the closet.* It would be a grand and noble sight to see our grand and noble Queen enthroned, with her crown and with her sceptre, and surrounded by her lords and nobles; but this sight would be poor and insignificant contrasted with that of a poor, weeping sinner down on his knees in his closet. *There*, while with hands uplifted, with eyes upraised, and with an open Bible, he pleads and prays, his faith rises, and wrestles like a giant; his hope leaps, and looks upward, and sees the clouds vanish and the heavens open; and the language of his lips is the old-fashioned language embodied in one of our hymns—

“The opening heavens around me shine
With beams of sacred bliss;
And Jesus shows His mercy mine,
And whispers I am His.”

This is a sight before which all the gold, and glitter, and glory, and goods of this wide world hide their diminished heads—a sight which makes the black prince of hell tremble, his chains rattle, his heart quail, his angels fly, and his wicked works crash and crumble.

It would be almost impossible for me to enumerate all the places where Christ has been sought and found. Some have sought and found Him in the family circle; some in the house of God; some in the prayer-meeting; some at the sacramental table; some in the Sabbath School; some in the warehouse; some in the counting-house; some in the shop; some in the factory; some in the market-place; some in the prison; some in the desert; some in the coal-pit; some on the ocean; some in the dens and caves of the earth.

All sought and found Him *by faith*. There is no other power which can apprehend Him; no other eye which can see Him; no other ear which can hear Him; no other hand which can grasp Him. This, and this only, is the means of revealing the invisible Christ to the inquiring and seeking soul.

“Faith lends its realising light,
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly,
The Invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye.”

Thousands and tens of thousands, dying in the faith of the Gospel, have found Christ in heaven. *On earth* they sought and saw Him by faith, but in heaven they see Him as He is, eye to eye, and face to face.

“With that beatific sight,
Glorious ecstasy is given;
This is their supreme delight,
And makes a heaven of heaven.”

What, I ask, would heaven be without Christ? Its foundations would give way; its walls would crumble; its towers would fall; its gates would grow rotten; its thrones would totter; its crowns would be tarnished; its robes would become thread-bare; its fields would wither; its flowers would die; its rivers, clear as crystal, would dry up; its sea of glass, without a ripple, would become stormy; its inhabitants would become wretched, and all its golden harps would be unstrung; but this is impossible. Christ is there, crowned with glory and honour. Oh, let the thought of seeing Jesus in heaven excite you onwards, and lead you to say—

“O, could we break this earthly fence,
Drop all our sorrows in the tomb,
Conveyed by angels, move from hence,
And fly some happy moment home;
Quit this dark house of mouldering clay,
And launch into eternal day.”

Materials for Sermons.

XII.—HEAVEN AND ITS INHABITANTS.

“And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”—Rev. vii. 13-17.

THIS passage, with the context, will furnish the following topics for consideration :—The inhabitants of heaven; their state and condition; and how they came thither.

I. THE INHABITANTS OF HEAVEN, that is—the inhabitants of heaven which have gone from earth. John had two visions of them; one in which he saw the number of the saved from Israel, one hundred and forty-four thousand—twelve thousand from each tribe. (See context.)

After he had seen these he looked again, and saw a great *multitude*, which was so great that no man could number. This

will give us an idea of the vastness of the inhabitants of heaven. No man, whatever his capability of counting, were able to count them. They are simply *innumerable* by man. God knows the number, and can tell them each by name.

This great multitude seems to have been distinct from the one hundred and forty-four thousand, and was comprised—1. *Of all nations*. No nationality unrepresented. 2. *Of all kindred, i.e.*, all relations, parents, children, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, &c. 3. *Of all people—i.e.*, all classes, rich and poor, educated and unlearned, princes and peasants; people of the cities, of the towns, of the villages. 4. *Of all tongues*. Many tongues spoken in this Babel-world; some of each who spoke them are in heaven.

Thus we see how the Jewish notion that Israel was only to be saved is false. Also that God, as Father of all, has children everywhere in the world, and that when they pass away hence He receives them into His eternal presence. Also, God is no respecter of persons, but that whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.

II. THE STATE AND CONDITION OF THE INHABITANTS OF HEAVEN.

1. *A state of purity*. "Clothed in white robes," ver. 9. They are free from sin and without fault before God. They mourned over sin here, and groaned under its load; but there they are freed from it in all its forms, relations, influence.

2. *A state of victory*. "And palms in their hands." Here they were in conflict. Now they have overcome, and are in final and endless triumph over all their foes; and, as a sign of it, they bear the palm in their hands.

3. *A state of honourable attendance*. "Before the throne," waiting the Divine pleasure. On earth their language was, "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me do? speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth." But this was before the footstool in penitence, faith, fear. In heaven they are *before the throne* joyfully, and seeing God, waiting the command of His will.

4. *A state of service*—"and serve." Here they served; but it was a service in which there was ignorance, imperfection, selfishness, and weariness. In heaven it is a service free from all these—a service of love, joy, perfection—a *service of rest*.

5. *A Divine service*—"serve Him," that is, God. Their service on earth was a service of God, but O, how much of earth, self, and others, was included in it! In heaven it will be purely and

exclusively a service of their Sovereign Father who sits on the throne. Whom should they serve but Him? His will is their law, and the doing of it their pleasure.

6. *A constant service*—"day and night." In another place John says, "There is no night in heaven," which is the fact. Here, he says, the inhabitants serve Him day and night, by which he simply means they serve Him *unceasingly*, day and night being used figuratively, or after the manner of earth, to denote all time or uninterruptedly for ever and ever.

7. *A temple service*—"serve Him in His temple." Here they serve Him in other ways than in His temple; but the temple service was their most welcome and pleasant. They said, We would rather be door-keepers in Thy house than dwell in the tents of wickedness. Now, they have the service exclusively in the temple. In God's temple. How different this to the temples of men, erected for their use, and by their benevolence! The temple of eternity built by God is on a scale of size, grandeur, commodiousness, becoming Him and the great multitude which have to serve Him in it.

We know not what will be the order of the service in that temple. It will, however, be of Divine planning, and such as will chime in with the nature, capacity, and feeling of every worshipper, so that no inhabitant will object to any part. None will serve in that temple as a Churchman, or as a Methodist, &c., but everyone in the way of Divine appointment.

8. *A state of Divine sociality*: "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." He will not occupy a place of eminence which they shall dread to approach, or remove to a palace among the hills of eternity as an earthly prince, to which they cannot draw nigh. No. He shall dwell among them; as a father in his family; as a friend with his friends; as a shepherd with his flock; as a teacher with his pupils. They shall dwell together in love, intercourse, and confidence. "Dwell among them," blessing, sustaining, and beatifying them.

9. *A state of satisfaction*. "They hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more." "Hunger and thirst" are not sins, but are evils connected with our present frailty of nature. In heaven, these evils are not known. "The Lamb shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters." Verse 17.

10. *A state of exemption from excessive light and heat*. The

climate and atmosphere of earth are changeable. The North is too cold, the South is too hot, the temperate is too uncertain. The force of this thought would have been better felt by us had we lived in the oriental clime, where the light and heat of the sun are intense. We may, however, get some conception of the blessedness of this state of heaven, if we call to mind the excessive light and heat of the harvest season in this country; especially as they are felt by those who are exposed to them in the harvest-field. But heaven's climate is perfect, and will suit every inhabitant, so that none shall suffer from any of the ailments which here afflict, through the character of the climate.

11. *A state of exemption from ALL the evils of this life.* "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Tears are not sins; but they are significant of evils of which we are the subjects: affliction, or losses, or sins, or death, &c. But in heaven these things are no more; therefore, tears are no more.

God shall wipe them away. Hence the removal will be certain, effectual, for ever. It will be happy; as the wiping of tears from the eyes of an injured child by the hand of a gentle and tender mother.

III. WHENCE CAME THEY? "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

1. They once were inhabitants of this world as we are. They were born in sin and lived in it.

2. But they did not go to heaven as such. They were washed from their sins and made clean.

3. Not by the waters of baptism; not by the efficacy of good works; but in the blood of the Lamb: through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus they were pardoned, renewed, and sanctified. In this, and this only, did they obtain meetness to become inhabitants of heaven.

Observe, *they* are said to have done this. It was an act of their own by faith. The fountain was provided by the free grace of God; and they, by faith, plunged in and were made clean; as Naaman in Jordan, or the diseased in Bethesda.

In the next place, they are said to have gone *out* of great tribulation. The blood cleansed them, and then tribulation, in various ways, tried and proved them. For Jesus' sake they *went into the fire, into the battle-field, into the storm; bore*

reproach, endured temptation, adversity, &c. But they endured all patiently and triumphantly; and at last went *out* of it up to heaven. Did not go out of it in cowardice, or unbelief, or fear, into the world again; but were faithful unto death, and then on angels' pinions fled away to heaven.

It is not said they went out of the blood, or its cleansing. No. They take this with them as their plea, their glory, their trust. The tribulation is left behind, the purity they take with them.

Purity and tribulation constitute the way from earth to heaven. The narrow way—the Divine way—the safe way—the old way—the only way. None have gone but in this way.

“But is there no other more easy, more agreeable, more delightful?” There is; but it is not the way to heaven. *Its* end is death.

Would you go and join the great multitude, you must be *followers* of them, under the leadership of the Good Shepherd. You may try ten thousand other ways, and not one of them bring you to the pearly gates. Bunyan saw other ways, but they ended in the dismal side entrance, where he heard those horrible things, and saw that fearful fire.

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XIII.—THE TROUBLES OF SIN.

“And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day.”—JOSHUA vii. 25.

THERE are two distinct kinds of characters whose names have been transmitted to posterity, and whose fame has been echoed and re-echoed by an astonished populace; some for their virtues, and some for their crimes; some for their glory, and some for their shame; and it was the lot of the person to whom the text was addressed to be of the latter description; a man who committed a notorious offence, and who met with a shameful and a degrading punishment. The context will sufficiently illustrate the crime of Achan, the peculiar process by which that crime was detected, and the mischievous effects by which it was attended. We will take occasion from the text to show—

I. THAT SIN IS A VERY TROUBLESOME THING.

The nature of sin may be clearly discovered in the subject before us. The children of Israel had just entered into the promised land; they had besieged Jericho, they had compassed it about seven days, had blown with their trumpets, the walls

had fallen down flat, and they had taken possession of the city. Joshua had charged the people not to "take of the accursed thing," &c. (vi. 18). Achan violated this charge (vii. 21). Such is the nature of all our crimes. God has given us the most plain, positive precepts, capable of universal application; these precepts we either ignorantly or wickedly transgress; and this transgression is sin. To prove that sin is a troublesome thing, let us consider—

1. *The load of guilt by which it oppresses us.* Whatever pleasure may attach to the anticipation or the act of sin, yet the recollection of it must, sooner or later, necessarily produce pain; arising from a consciousness that we have offended God, provoked His Majesty, grieved His Spirit, and exposed ourselves to the eternal punishment of hell.

2. *The shifts, subterfuges, and tricks, resorted to for the purpose of concealing our sins, or transferring the blame to others, are convincing proofs that sin troubles us.* Look at Adam, our great progenitor in crime: he first sought to hide himself from his Maker's presence; he then attempts to shift off the blame on the woman; and the woman, in her turn, transfers it to the serpent. Behold Achan, allured by the tempting glare of the gold and the tawdry vestment: he slyly purloins them, digs a hole beneath his tent, and there conceals the pilfered spoils. Had he no fear of being discovered? There are thousands of crimes perpetrated in the dark, when the deluded subjects have trembled with fearful apprehensions lest they should be detected.

3. *Sin troubles us by its corrupt and restless influence on the tempers and dispositions.* Every sinful temper is troublesome. How troublesome to be proud—look at Haman and Nebuchadnezzar; to be envious—behold Pharaoh, Saul, and the ungodly Jews who crucified Christ; to be covetous—see Achan, Gehazi, Ananias, and Judas. (Isa. lvii. 20.) But it is chiefly into futurity that we are to look for the troubles of sin. (Prov. xi. 21; Ezek. xviii. 4; Rom. vi. 23.) Thus sin produces trouble personally; but it is relative trouble to which the text refers: "Why hast thou troubled us?" A sinner is a troublesome being; he troubles his family: look at Achan, verse 24. (Prov. xv. 27.) It is very questionable whether his sons and his daughters were burnt with him, or were only spectators of his punishment; at any rate, his sin must have been a source of incon-

solable grief to his family. Happy for the world were there no such ungodly parents now; but, alas! who can help seeing that characters not a whit better than Achan abound in every department of society? But the trouble produced by Achan's crimes was not merely domestic, but national. Israel was discomfited; some fell in battle; the hearts of the people melted, and became as water; Joshua, valiant and courageous as he was, rent his clothes, fell on his face, and regretted that they had ever crossed Jordan. (Chap. vii. 5-9.) The whole nation of Israel groaned under the curse of Achan's sin. Oh, how frequently has the pride or ambition of a few individuals troubled a whole nation, and disturbed the peace of millions!

II. HOWEVER ARTFULLY CONCEALED, SIN MUST BE EXPOSED.

Who can doubt but that Achan strove to conceal his crime? But, by the providence of God, it was exposed to the camp of Israel.

1. *The most secret sins are often revealed in this world.* Some "declare their sin, as Sodom." (Isa. iii. 9.) Others seek to conceal their crimes, and use a thousand artifices to cover their transgressions; but oh, how vain! By a marvellous providence they are often disclosed; and not unfrequently sinners have revealed their own shame.

2. *Those sins that escape detection here, will be manifested in the last day.* (Eccles. xii. 14.)

III. WHEN THE SINNER IS EXPOSED, HE IS LEFT WITHOUT ANY REASONABLE EXCUSE.

Joshua said, "*Why* hast thou troubled us?" What could he say? Could he plead ignorance of the law? No; it was published in the camp of Israel. The weakness of human nature? No; he had strength to do his duty. The prevalence of temptation? No; others had similar temptations, and yet conquered. And what shall we have to say when God shall summon us to His bar? Alas! if guilty, we shall be as speechless as Achan was.

IV. THAT PUNISHMENT TREADS UPON THE HEELS OF SIN.

"The Lord shall trouble thee this day."

1. *God has power to trouble sinners.* He can make the elements become the executioners of His wrath, as He did to Sodom, &c. He can make the most despicable insects plague His enemies, as He did to the Egyptians. He can arm the

sinner's conscience against himself, as He did to Judas. Nay, the whole creation is a "capacious reservoir of means," which He can employ at His pleasure.

2. *God will trouble sinners.* He will either bring them to repentance, when they shall "look upon Him whom they have pierced, and mourn;" or He will vex them in His wrath, and dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel. To be convinced that He will trouble sinners, we need only read His threatenings and observe His general conduct. And what kind of trouble will be their portion when God will shut them out of heaven, and plunge them, with His vengeful curse upon their heads, into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, I am at a loss to describe.

Infer, 1. *What a powerful preventive this should be to deter us from committing sin.* We all feel a repugnance to trouble; we shrink from its attacks, and sin must trouble us; then, why live under its power?

2. *See the madness of sinners,* who, for the sake of a few sordid, despicable pleasures, which always leave a sting behind, will desperately plunge themselves into an abyss of troubles which know no bound nor termination.

3. *Since sin is so troublesome, let us all seek a deliverance from its dominion and influence.* "The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin."

4. *Learn what ideas you should entertain of those who seek to entice you to sin.* They are agents of the devil, and you should shun their company as you would shun perdition.

RICHARD TREFFRY, Sen.

XIV.—BETHESDA.

"Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches," &c.—JOHN v. 2-4.

THE pool, "called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda," had periodically remarkable healing properties, which made it a common resort for sick persons. For the accommodation of these "five porches" were provided, and "in these lay a great multitude of impotent folk," &c. From the text let us observe—

I. THE POOL TO WHICH THE INVALIDS RESORTED.

"The pool called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda." Observe—

1. *That the name "Bethesda" signifies "house of mercy."* Because many afflicted with various diseases received mercy and healing. This is illustrative of the Gospel—a message of mercy—the remedy for man.

(1.) This remedy was provided by Christ. We have not to ask whether Christ shall suffer for sinners. He has suffered—died for the ungodly. 1 Pet. iii. 18; Isa. liii. 5. Christ, by His death, obtained pardon for the guilty, purity for the polluted, life for the dead, salvation for all. Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

(2.) This remedy is made known to man. Christ said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," &c. Matt. xvi. 15, 16. The disciples proclaimed it. Mark xvi. 20; Acts ii. 41-47. This remedy is still proclaimed by the servants of Christ. Through Christ "is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." 1 John ii. 2. The streams of mercy still flow.

"Hark! the Gospel news is sounding,
Christ hath suffered on the tree;
Streams of mercy are abounding,
Grace for all is rich and free.
Now, poor sinner,
Look to Him who died for thee."

2. *The healing power of Bethesda extended to "whatsoever disease" the invalids had.* This is illustrative of the healing virtue of the Gospel. There is no moral disease it cannot cure, no soul it cannot save. How exactly it suits every sinner's case. Why? (1.) Because Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour. Thousands have flocked to Him from time to time, but the healing power of His blood is not lessened. 1 John i. 7. Multitudes have partaken of the rich provisions of the Gospel feast, but they are not exhausted nor in the least diminished. There is enough for each, for all, and for evermore. (2.) Because Christ is infinitely *willing*, and infinitely *able* to save all that come to Him. He died to save; He now lives to save. It is His purpose to save all who come to Him, and His will that all should come. Ezek. xxxiii. 11; Isa. lv. 1. He is "mighty to save." Heb. vii. 25. (3.) Because Christ is perfectly accessible to every coming sinner. John vi. 37. There is no difficulty in coming to Christ; He is perfectly *accessible*. No sinner need mistake his way. The way is short

and easy. From sin to Christ. The sinner is not required to look at his past life; at his fitness to come to Christ; at the temptations and trials he will have; or at the deportment of those already in the Church. He is required to look to Christ. This all sinners may do in all parts of the world. Isa. xlv. 22.

II. THE MANNER AND THE TIME IN WHICH THE POOL WAS RENDERED EFFICACIOUS.

1. *The manner in which Bethesda was rendered efficacious.* "An angel went down," &c. The Gospel is rendered efficacious by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has descended. The waters are troubled. Acts ii. 33-37; Heb. x. 14, 15; Acts xvii. 31. The Spirit convinces sinners of their condition and need, of the sin of rejecting Christ, and of Christ's willingness and ability to save them.

2. *The time in which Bethesda was efficacious.* "At a certain season." Perhaps at a certain time of the day, during the feast of the Jews. Then the water was miraculously endowed with a miraculous healing quality.

Man's probationary state is a gracious season; a season in which he may be saved, and in which he must be saved if ever he is saved at all. The Gospel is always efficacious to heal—to heal those who seek its blessings. Rom. i. 16.

The sick person was healed who stepped in immediately; for "whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." This may indicate. (1.) God's readiness to save those who repent and turn to Him. Mercy is essential unto God. All His attributes sit at the throne of His mercy, "ready to pardon." Neh. ix. 17. Incomparable in forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Ps. cxiii. 8. But as the invalid was required to step into the pool, so the sinner is required to believe in Christ. Unless the invalid stepped in he could not be made whole; and unless the sinner enters the "fountain opened for sin and uncleanness," he cannot be cleansed "from all unrighteousness." It is indicative. (2.) Of the danger of delay. Only those who stepped in first were cured. We cannot compare this pool with the fountain for sin, no more than we can compare a candle with a star, or the moon with the sun. One healed the body, the other cures the soul. The one cured only the first who stepped in, the other cures all who step in. The one retained its efficacy only for a

short season, but the other retains its healing power always. Oh, seek to be saved now, for the time may soon come when you cannot be saved. Others may enter into the kingdom before you. Seek then to be saved now, and hold fast that no man take your crown. Let us pass on to observe.

III. THE INVALIDS THAT RESORTED TO THE POOL.

1. *They were afflicted with various diseases*: "Blind, halt, withered." All characters may come to Christ. The blind, who cannot see; the deaf, who cannot hear; the dumb, who cannot speak; and the lame, who cannot walk. Christ can make the blind see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to sing for joy, and the lame to leap as an hart. Oh wondrous power, the power of Christ to save!

2. *They were many in number*: "A great multitude of impotent people." The healing power of the troubled water to restore those who first stepped in brought a great multitude of sufferers to the pool; but the cleansing efficacy of the Saviour's blood to cleanse all who wash therein attracts but few to its source. "Few there be that go in thereat." But the attractions shall increase. The Gospel shall prevail, &c.

3. *They waited for a cure*: "Waiting for the moving of the water." None are required to wait for the cleansing power. It is always in the fountain for sin. Yet many are waiting to be saved. *Some carelessly*: not caring to be saved now. *Others anxiously*: hoping to be saved, but making no effort. Why wait? The waters are troubled, the blood is efficacious, and Christ is present to save. 2 Cor. vi. 2.

In conclusion—

1. *Sinner, you are the subject of an awful disease.* Isaiah i. 6. This disease may terminate fatally.

2. *In Christ is to be found a cure.* Isaiah lv. 6, 7.

J. B. HOBBERY.



God's Goodness.—In all the promises we should have special recourse to God in them. In all storms there is sea-room enough in the infinite goodness of God for faith to be carried with full sail.—*Stibbs.*

Divisions of Texts.

A MODEL WORKMAN.

"Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God: so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ."—Rom. xv. 19.

HERE is a text full of instruction. It shows in an outline the work of a truly good workman. Here is boldness in service; undaunted perseverance under difficulties; and distinguished tokens of success.

We find in the text the theme; the labours; the faithfulness; the success; and the source of power of Paul as a preacher and an apostle.

I. THE THEME. "The Gospel of Christ."

1. A grand theme. Reveals "life and immortality." 2 Tim. i. 10.

2. An instructive theme. 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6.

3. A powerful theme. Rom. i. 16; 1 Thes. i. 5.

II. THE LABOURS. "From Jerusalem," &c.

1. Shows attention to home work. *Jerusalem* coming first.

2. Foreign work. Illyricum being a remote part of the ancient world, extending as it does to Italy and Germany. Titus paid a visit to Dalmatia, situated at its southern portion. 2 Tim. iv. 10. This is how the Gentiles received the news of the Gospel—namely, by labour and travel.

III. FAITHFULNESS. "Have fully preached."

1. In declaring the Word of God.

2. In holding fast sound doctrine. 2 Cor. xv. 17; Jer. xxiii. 28.

3. In continuing unto death. Rev. ii. 10.

IV. SUCCESS. "Through mighty signs and wonders."

1. Outward and visible to the eyes of the world.

2. Beyond dispute. 3. Continuous. 4. Characteristic.

V. SOURCE OF POWER. "The Spirit of God."

1. Not of himself. 1 Cor. ii. 2. Paul was "a chosen vessel."

2. But by the aid of the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor. iii. 16.

3. All the three Persons in the blessed Trinity. The "*Spirit*" of "*God*," Gospel of "*Christ*." Here is the source of power, but how did Paul obtain this power? *Prayer*, individually and

unitedly, is the means used by Paul for the accomplishment of his mission. See Rom. xv. 30.

We have a gracious God, a loving Saviour, an abiding Spirit.

JOHN ROBERTS.

SANCTIFIED AFFLICTION.

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."—2 Cor. xii. 7-9.

I. THE NATURE OF SANCTIFIED TRIBULATION. Thorn in the flesh—something which distresses, perplexes, and often pains.

II. THE DESIGN OF SANCTIFIED TRIBULATION. To prevent our exaltation. To keep back vain-glorying. To hide pride from man.

III. THE RELIEF. Earnest and importunate prayer.

IV. THE RESULTS. Grace given; submission to the will of God; glorying in infirmities, that the power of Christ may abide upon us.—*John Farrar*.

A REVIVAL.

"Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?"—PSALM lxxxv, 6.

I. WHAT is a revival?

II. The need of a revival.

III. The Reviver.

IV. The means to obtain a revival.

V. The effects of a revival. Chiefly in the Church: "That Thy people may rejoice in Thee." This implies that in the absence of a revival they are either dejected or sorrowful, or rejoice in other things; but when a revival comes there is a joyfulness in God, &c.

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BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT.

"Be filled with the Spirit."—Eph. v. 11.

In order to our being filled with the Spirit we must—

I. *Be aware of the magnitude of the blessing.* 1. The Spirit is the great promise of the New Testament dispensation. 2.

The gift of the Spirit more than compensates for the absence of the bodily presence of Christ.

II. Be filled with the Spirit. This supposes *that we have a relish for the blessing.*

III. In order to being filled with the Spirit, *we must make room for Him.* Empty ourselves of every contrary spirit, &c.

IV. In order to be filled with the Spirit, *we must be the subject of the same ardent desire expressed in many parts of Scripture;* as, "Create within me a clean heart," &c.

V. *We must yield to His influences* in all things, places, and times.—*Dr. Beaumont.*



Preacher's Counsellor.

LET NO MAN DESPISE THEE.

"LET no man despise thy youth," wrote Paul to Timothy. Charles W. Jacobs commenced preaching the Gospel when he was about sixteen years old, yet everywhere he went the people respected him, because they saw in him an unpretending, earnest youth, intent upon performing what he understood to be the work of his life—calling sinners to repentance. We have known other young ministers whom no man despised; and we have known some, alas! upon whom their congregations and elder brethren looked down with pity, if not with some sterner emotion. Taking these facts into consideration, we venture to offer a few suggestions in amplification of the idea set forth in the heading of this article.

Let no man despise thee for *frivolity*. It is right to make one's self agreeable to those into whose society he is thrown, provided his complaisance observes the proper limits; but frivolity is not characteristic of a man intent on high aims, and feeling it of the utmost importance that he accomplish them. Say what you will of clerical buffoonery, the very men who seem to relish most the parson's jests esteem him less than they would if his conduct were more agreeable to his office. Frivolity is seen in many things besides conversation. Other men may

do a hundred harmless things that a minister may not condescend to do. He is "doing a great work, and cannot come down."

Let no man despise thee for *slothfulness*. A young preacher, in good health, who lies in bed in the morning long after the family whose hospitality he shares are astir, and waiting for him at breakfast, compelling them, perhaps, to neglect their work, or conduct family worship without him, is a social nuisance that, in the opinion of many families, should be abated. And there are not a few congregations that have no better opinion of the young preacher who is lounging about, or conducting a flirtation, when he should be preparing, by diligent study, for edifying exhibitions of the truth in the pulpit.

Let no man despise thee for airs of *self-importance*. There is no use in trying to appear what you are not. Men will honour you not for what you pretend to be, but for what they find you are. The quiet, unassuming demeanour of one who evidently desires not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, weighs much more with reflecting men than all the mouthing and swagger of the conceited. They respect the former; they pity or despise the latter.

Let no man despise thee for a *time-serving spirit*. Be manly. Have your opinions; form them deliberately, and when it is proper to utter them, do so with frankness, and without the fear of mortal. It is not advisable to be parading your sentiments on every subject. There is a degree of reserve due to self-respect and the feelings of others. But when you feel that it is time to speak, when silence would be treason against truth, and conscience prompts to utterance, speak out kindly, calmly (it will be the more powerful for being calmly said), but boldly and decidedly. You may give offence. How can a true man avoid giving offence in such a world as this? But men will not despise you for speaking like a man of truth and courage. They will admire you; and, what is better, they may live to thank you for the very words that stung them, and thank God for endowing you with the fidelity that saved them.

Emblems from Gotthold.

GOLD IN WATER;

OR, CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT.

GOTTHOLD recollected having once read, that if a cup be filled with water to the brim, so that the smallest addition of any fluid would cause it to overflow, it is nevertheless possible to drop into it several gold coins, without any such effect. He tried the experiment, and finding it successful, remarked: What a beautiful image I have here of a contented Christian heart! God gives us the necessities of life in full measure, and if we have these we ought to be content. Sometimes, too, He also gives us superfluities, and drops one or more gold pieces into our cup. Unfortunately, however, there are too many whom this makes wanton, proud, and haughty, and who overflow in pomp, prodigality, and contempt of their poorer neighbours. It should not be so. We ought to learn both *how to abound and how to suffer need* with equanimity. (Phil. iv. 12.) Riches and prosperity ought not to inflate our pride. We should keep ourselves under the restraint of humility, and show gratitude to God and generosity to our brethren. In that case, methinks, this cup will be our appropriate emblem.

My God, give me neither poverty nor riches (Prov. xxx. 8.); *but whatever it may be Thy will to give, give me with it a heart which knows humbly to acquiesce in what is Thy will.*

THE CLUCKING HEN;

OR, DIVINE CARE.

GOTTHOLD saw a clucking hen wandering about with her brood, and observing the care she took of them, reflected thus: Our Saviour has so far honoured the clucking hen, as to choose it for an image of Himself, for He says of disobedient Jerusalem: How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. (Matt. xxiii. 37.) In point of fact, we behold in this animal a rich miracle of maternal affection. In some degree she does violence to her nature, changes her voice, seats herself, contrary to her habit, upon the earth, is continually scraping in the

ground, and when she has found a corn, or worm, divides it among her chickens; she covers them with her wings, protects them, even above her ability, against hostile animals, and voluntarily undergoes all sorts of hardship and inconvenience in their behalf.

Lord Jesus, every hen I see shall remind me of Thy care and faithfulness, and in all emergencies I will take refuge beneath the wings of Thy grace. Who is he who will then harm me?

THE WOOD-WORM;

OR, DEATH.

ONE day, in his study, Gotthold heard a wood-worm busily employed gnawing the rafter, and it reminded him of a singular conception of death, which, as he had recently read, had been brought into vogue by certain learned and celebrated scholars. They represented it as a small invisible worm, produced in the corrupt fluids of the human body; and which gradually consumes the vital power. If their language be metaphorical, said Gotthold to himself, I have no objections to embrace their opinion. In point of fact, death is generated from the morbid secretions of the soul, in other words, from sins; and it gnaws and consumes the life of man from his birth, and at last, by God's permission, wholly undermines it. This little worm, however, which makes the noise I hear, deserves my thanks for the salutary interruption of my labours. It calls to me, as it were, to work diligently, as if I had the prospect of a long life, but also at the same time to pray, and prepare for death, as if I had not another day to live.

O Lord, help me often to remember that the end must come, that life has a term, and that it is fast passing away.

THE SILK-WORM;

OR, THE GRAVE.

GOTTHOLD, on being shown some silk-worms, kept by a boy in a band-box, and fed with mulberry leaves, thought with himself: And so it is a worm that ministers to men the means of luxury and pomp. I could wish that no ribbon were ever either sold or put on until such a worm were shown and contemplated. *Perhaps this might lead some to reflect how absurd it is for one*

worm to ornament himself with what another spins, especially considering that at last, with all his glory, he must become the prey of worms. For the rest, the silk-worm obeys the instinct which is common to all the caterpillar tribe. When it has eaten its portion, and lived its time, it looks about for some corner in which it may lie down, unseen and undisturbed, and die. There it immures and envelops itself in its web, and all the store which it has gathered serves no other purpose than to make for it a burying-place. Alas, ye children of men! you, too, eat and drink, accumulate fortunes, and strain every nerve to become great in the world; but all this issues at last in the necessity of choosing for yourselves a grave. Happy he who, from this insect, learns in time to forego temporal things, and bends all his thoughts to consider how he may at last die in peace!

Thou faithful God! my chief anxiety is for my soul, and the best thing I can do for it is to wrap and clothe it in the fair white silk of Christ's righteousness. (Rev. xix. 8.) Grant that, like a beautiful butterfly, I may one day burst forth, and wing my way to the life eternal.

Pulpit Illustrations.

ECCLES. iii. 2.—A TIME TO DIE.

A TIME to die! only one time. In seeking a fortune we may make new trials when we fail in one; but dying is one solemn, final, eternal experiment! The voyager launches upon a shoreless sea, and returns no more for ever to the land he leaves. "Man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep!" The tide of life will roll on; the bustle of the world will continue; friends will meet in smiles and part in tears as before; flowers will bloom, and stars will shine; empires will arise and fall; the sower will

walk forth and scatter in hope ; the reaper will gather the sheaf to his bosom ; autumn winds will moan, and fierce wintry storms will drive in anger past ; the cheerful hearth will chime its crackling notes of comfort, with glad music of fireside joys ; but by all this the dead are not disturbed, for "they have no more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun." They die, and are laid into the grave, and then all is to them alike—

"The storm that wrecks the wintry sky
No more disturbs their calm repose,
Than summer evening's latest sigh
That shuts the rose."

EQUAL AND UNEQUAL.

"Hear now, O house of Israel ; is not my way equal ? are not your ways unequal ?"—Ezek. xviii. 25.

THE term "House," applied to Israel as a whole people, signifies the national unity—a nation intended to be held together in one, as a household is one.

"Equal" and "unequal" mean here *consistent* and *inconsistent*. And the consistency referred to is not so much consistency with some past line of conduct, as with what is absolutely right and good in itself. A good man's ways are "equal," not because he always acts, or always thinks, or always feels with the same degree of energy, or the same degree of prudence, or the same degree of success ; but because the several parts of his action, and his thought, and his feeling, are deliberately regulated by a reference to one principle which in its nature can never be changed. If he were perfectly consistent with that principle, his ways in all the departments of his life would be perfectly equal. We call him consistent in his goodness in a proximate and common sense, when the general tenor of his life shows that he is loyal at heart to that principle, that his deliberate actings are governed by it, and that his occasional impulsive deviations from it are deplored, disowned, and repented of, so as to be no longer a part of himself.

On the other hand, a bad man's ways are "unequal," not because he is always contradicting himself in set terms, or always falling into great difficulties or absurdities ; for he may have sagacity and skill enough in his wickedness to escape such embarrassments, and there may be a sort of outward uniformity

or smoothness in his unprincipled and selfish way through the world; but his ways are nevertheless really "unequal" in this, that he serves himself, counsels for himself, acts, thinks, feels for himself, while himself is a changeable, uncertain, perishable creature. In a skiff at sea you may follow carefully all night the zigzag course of a lantern hanging from the mast of a vessel before you, which is tacking and veering capriciously to every point of the compass; and so with reference to the following of that lantern you will be consistent; but your course will not be consistent, as *his* is consistent who sails steadily on by the pole-star in the sky.—*Rev. Dr. Huntington.*

A REVIVAL.

"O Lord, revive Thy work."—HAB. iii. 2.

A REVIVAL in the spring of religion, the renovation of life and gladness. It is the season in which young converts burst into existence and beautiful activity. The Church resumes her toil and labour and care with freshness and energy. The air all round is balmy, and diffusing the sweetest odours. The whole landscape teems with living promises of an abundant harvest of righteousness and peace. It is the jubilee of holiness. A genial warmth pervades and refreshes the whole Church. Showers of "vernal delight and joy" descend gently and copiously. Delightful influences are wafted by every breeze. Where the dead leaves of winter still linger, the primrose and the daisy spring up in modest loveliness. Trees long barren put forth buds of beauty and power. The whole valley is crowned with fragrant and varied blossoms. Forms of beauty bloom on every side, and Zion is the joy of the whole earth. If the spirit that renews the face of the earth is a spirit of beauty, in the elegance of the germs, the tints of the buds, the verdure of the foliage, the splendour of the blossoms, and the witching glories of the matured fruits of nature, "how great is His beauty" when acting out His lovely and holy perfections in revivals of religion. "In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of *Beauty* unto the residue of His people." This is His promise concerning these seasons of refreshing from His presence: "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be

as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return. They shall *revive* as the corn, and grow as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon." These passages are redolent with the influences of the reviving Spirit. They make the reader feel himself in the midst of their fragrant odours and beautiful glories.—*Dr. Jenkyn.*

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

"He ever liveth to make intercession for us."—*HEB. vii. 25.*

THE word "intercession" is a law term borrowed from courts of judicature, and signifies the action of a proxy or attorney, either in suing out the rights of his client, or answering the cavils and objections brought against him by the plaintiff.

Thus doth Christ for believers. He appears for them. *Heb. ix. 24.* He is entered into heaven, appearing in the presence of God for us. Nay, He doth in some sense carry believers into heaven with Him, and there set them before His Father's throne, as we have it, *Eph. ii. 6*, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Even as the high-priest did bear the names of the twelve tribes upon his breast when he entered into the holy of holies, so Christ, when He entered into heaven, bears upon His heart the names and persons of all His, and presents them before His Father. He hath taken their cause, and pleads it with God His Father; as the apostle speaks, "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." *1 John ii. 1.*

In these particulars we may see wherein the intercession of Christ consists. (1.) In presenting His own person, and appearing in the court of heaven for us. (2.) In offering up our duties and services. (3.) In presenting His own merits. (4.) In presenting His own will and desire to His Father.—*Bishop Hopkins.*

GRACE FOR GRACE.

"And of His fulness have we received grace for grace."—*JOHN i. 16.*

OF His fulness we receive grace for grace: that is, as a child in generation receiveth from his parents member for member; or the paper from the press, letter for letter; or the glass from the face, image for image; so in regeneration Christ is fully formed

in a man, and He receiveth, in some measure and proportion, *grace for grace*. There is no grace in Christ appertaining to general sanctification which is not in some degree fashioned in Him. Thus there is in Christ *a fulness of grace*, answerable to a fulness of sin in us.—*Bp. Reynolds.*

ISA. ix. 6.—CHRIST A PRINCE OF PEACE.

MOSES was a *man* of peace, but not a *prince* of peace. Had he been a prince of peace, how easily might he have instilled peaceable and calm affections into the mutinous and murmuring people. But though he had it in himself, yet he had it not to distribute. But Christ hath peace as a king hath honours, to dispense and dispose of to whom He will. "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you."—*Ibid.*

AFFLICTION A SIGN OF GOD'S LOVE TO US.

"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."—*HEB. xii. 6.*

QUESTION not thy condition; doubt not concerning God's love, because of the greatness of thy affliction. Thy affliction may be very great, and yet thou mayest be a person of whom the world is not worthy, in God's account. I will give you this parable, apply it yourself:—Suppose you see a company of children playing together one while, and, may be, afterwards fighting; and then you see a man come and carry away one of the children, and he strikes him, but he lets the others alone, and he strikes them not; which of these children will ye say this man is a father unto? Will ye not say, "In all likelihood he is a father unto that child that he carries away and strikes?" I leave you to apply it.—*W. Bridge.*



GOD'S LOVE, ITS POWER.—If the ice be but broken overnight by the husbandman, when he comes the next day he finds it frozen up again; but let the sun dart on it his warm beams, and then it runs down in streams. So the breaking of the heart by the terrors of the Law, is but like the breaking of the ice with a pole by the husbandman to give the cattle drink; but when the love of God comes to the heart, then the corruptions of the heart dissolve, even as the ice dissolves when the warm beams of the sun rest upon it.—*Burroughs.*

Wesley and Whitfield.

WHITFIELD preached with the tongue of angels; Wesley organised the church with the prudence, and more than the prudence, of men. Whitfield converted souls individually; Wesley in collective masses. Whitfield caught men singly, as by a fishing-rod; Wesley took them in nets. Whitfield, like Saul, slew his thousands; Wesley, like David, his tens of thousands. "Whitfield was all soul; Wesley all system. After a preaching paroxysm, Whitfield lay panting on his couch, spent, breathless, and deathlike. After his morning sermon, Wesley would mount his pony, and trot, and chat, and gather simples till he reached some country hamlet, where he would halt his charger and talk through a little sermon with the villagers, and remount his pony and trot away again." Whitfield's sermons were distinguished by overwhelming but convulsive power; Wesley's by quiet conversational interest. Whitfield cared nothing for pastoral work, and had no head for ecclesiastical polity; Wesley was a man for governing and ruling and constructing. Whitfield was never at home except when preaching in the open air, in those "airy pluralities" of which he himself beautifully speaks; Wesley, to the work of an evangelist, added the care and anxious oversight of a bishop. Whitfield's power died with him—he founded and wished to found no church, and even imprecated on his head the curse of God if he should ever make the attempt to connect his name with a sect; Wesley devoted his lifelong existence, all his skill, and learning, and knowledge of human nature, to building up what has ever continued to be a powerful and prosperous body. Whitfield was a mountain torrent, collecting suddenly and bursting out impetuously, sweeping irresistibly on and uttering a voice of far-heard thunder more than proportionate to its volume of waters, doing much but speedily drying up, disappearing, and leaving its channel empty; Wesley was a calm deep river, flowing on majestically, enriching the soil through which it flowed, and gathering around it gradually cottages, castles, villages, and large and populous cities, rising like the creations of its quiet yet powerful waters.—*George Gilfillan.*



THE LAY PREACHER.

The Mad Preacher.

“I am not mad.”—ACTS xxvi. 25.

MUCH learning doth make thee mad,” said the worldly Festus to the apostolic Paul: and so says the worldling in these days to the preacher of the Gospel, who, like Paul, is zealously affected to save souls and to spread the glory of the Cross among the children of men. The preacher who prophesies smooth things, who leaves untouched the conscience in its slumbers, who goes not into the secret chambers of the world’s wickedness and attacks its idols of pleasure, gold, and science, who allows the world to have its own way in everything, is unmolested with hard words and abusive names. He is left to go on in his see-saw way, and is a “decent man,” a “quiet neighbour,” and a “good companion.” But if, as the man of Tarsus, he preach of “righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,” making an application to the lives of his individual hearers; if he expose the hollowness, rottenness, and pride of the world, and is more than ordinarily zealous to save his own soul and them that hear him, he is “mad,” “raving,” “beside himself,” a “frantic Methodist.”

But this judgment of the world against Paul-like preachers is of little worth, because of one reason, even

were ~~there no other~~—viz., that it is inconsistent with the spirit and practice of the world itself. The Paul-like preacher mad! Then what is the *worldling*? Surely he is as zealous for a bauble as the Christian for a crown; as active for the short-lived things of time as the Christian for the enduring realities of heaven; as enthusiastic for the glories of an hour as the Christian for the glories of an eternity. If the degree of activity and earnestness regulate the degree of madness to which each is subject, undoubtedly the worldling has the highest amount by far. This is upon the assumption that the objects of each respectively are equal in importance. But if the view of Scripture and reason be taken of the respective objects, then those of the worldling reflect upon his course of life a madness of the most consummate character; while the objects of the Christian reflect upon ~~his~~ ^{his} course the highest wisdom, although not so active and energetic as their value and importance demand.

Then let not the worldling accuse the Paul-like preacher of madness in his attention to things which he, the worldling, will acknowledge to be of vital importance, while he is himself more attentive to things which he also will acknowledge to be of less moment and consequence.

Look at the husbandman. How earnest and active he is in the cultivation of his lands, the sowing of his grain, the watching of his crops, and their ingathering at the proper season! Is he mad? Certainly not. He is considered reasonable and wise. Then why should the zealous cultivator of human souls—the man who breaks up the fallow ground, and sows the seed of eternal life, and watches as he who must give account—be spoken of as an enthusiast?

See the mercantile man. He journeys from north to south and from east to west; sails over every sea, and visits every clime; braves dangers of climate and of people,

and exposes himself to death in ten thousand ways. What for? To make his fortune. If he make it, does anyone blame him? No. He is a clever, enviable, successful man, in the judgment of the world. He is courted, fawned upon, and honoured, as a man of enterprise and wealth. But the man who gives up all for Christ, and goes with his life in his hands to win souls to God from the wilds and woes of humanity, he is "mad" in his cause, and there is nothing to justify him!

Our country is invaded. The cry sounds like thunder through the land, "To arms, and meet the coming foe." The people rise from every part, and in the warmest patriotism stand and fight for victory or death. Millions of money are spent, and thousands of lives sacrificed. What is all this? It is the love of country. It is commendable patriotism. No one censures it as madness and insanity. But when the preachers and people of Christ rise up in firm, zealous, determined resistance of the powers of hell invading the individual, the family, or the nation, the cry is, "Madmen, superstition, fools, bigotry, fanaticism!"

There is a man charged with a crime which, if proved, will expose him to death. The best counsel is engaged. Every point of law is examined, no argument left untried, no favourable evidence kept back. The counsel pleads, appeals, takes hold of every feeling and consideration of the jury. Why so? The *life* of a man is at stake! Is that counsel mad? Does anyone say he is? No. His whole procedure accords with his *reason* and profession. He is commended for his zeal; and if he had not been in earnest he would have deserved the execration of public feeling and words.

But when a preacher, like Paul, stands and pleads with God and man on behalf of the life of a soul, precious as the blood of Jesus, and immortal as the duration of Deity—

pleads as though he ne'er should plead again, a dying man with dying men—he is said to be “mad!”

A watchman is placed to spy out the coming foe; but he sleeps, or is a traitor, and allows the enemy to pass the gates. He is tried for his crime, and death is the penalty which he has to pay for his negligence.

The preacher of the Gospel, as a sentinel, is set upon his watch-tower. He sees the enemy coming. He cries aloud, and fears not. He lifts up his voice as a trumpet to awaken the sleepy inhabitants to arms and resistance. They open their eyes in dismay, they see no danger, they say the watchman is giving a needless alarm; they say he is “mad,” and are ready to stone him as they did Stephen. Who is mad—the watchman or the people?

No, no; the faithful and earnest preacher of the Gospel is not mad. He who preaches the whole counsel of God, whether to sinner or saint, to rich or poor, as Paul, has wisdom, benevolence, the Bible on his side. He is a messenger of mercy to the guilty, a bearer of good tidings to the oppressed, a faithful witness to the truth. He is not mad. It is the man who shuts his eyes to danger, who rushes headlong to ruin, while the loving herald of the Cross entreats him to return, that is mad. “He that winneth souls is wise; and he that turns many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.”



Biblical and Theological Themes.

REPENTANCE.

THE duty of repentance is strongly enforced in every part of the New Testament. By John the Baptist, who was the immediate herald of the Evangelical Dispensation. Matt. iii. 2. By our Lord, who carried on that dispensation to its completion.

Matt. iv. 17; Luke xiii. 3, 5. And by the apostles, who published the ample provisions of that dispensation as so completed. Acts ii. 38; xx. 21. Repentance is therefore a duty clearly appointed in the commencement, the progress, and the maturity of the Christian system, emphatically and peculiarly so called.

But there is one passage which places this subject in the clearest light, and which may be most usefully selected as a text for a discourse on repentance. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but *now commandeth all men* everywhere to repent." Acts xvii. 30. Our purpose is to consider the nature, the necessity, and the especial design of repentance.

I. Let us consider the *nature* of repentance. Repentance is briefly defined by Mr. Wesley, "conviction of sin," but then it is conviction of sin to which the penitent yields and submits.

It will not, therefore, be amiss if we draw out this definition somewhat more at large, and test its truth by an appeal to the examples of repentance which are regarded in the New Testament, such as the penitent publican, Luke xviii. 13; the penitent Jews, Acts ii.; and the penitent Saul of Tarsus, Acts ix. Repentance, then, includes—

1. Conviction of sin.
2. Compunction for sin, as arising out of that conviction.
3. Departure from sin, with earnest desires to be delivered from its power.
4. Humiliation of heart before God.

II. Let us also consider the *necessity* of repentance.

1. It is indispensably necessary. "God commandeth it."
2. It is universally necessary. "God commandeth *all men* everywhere to repent."
3. It is immediately necessary, without delay. "*Now* God commandeth it."

III. Let us finally attend to the especial *design* of repentance.

1. Its design is doubtless to subdue our perverse and rebellious hearts, and thus to dispose us for the humble reception of God's most unmerited mercy.
2. Its design is also to embitter all our sins, how pleasing, profitable, or habitual soever they may have been.
3. Its design is, further, to fill us with earnest desires after God and His forgiving love.
4. And thus its design is to prepare the way for that faith through which alone we immediately and directly obtain the personal enjoyment of salvation.

1. "Repentance in its grace and power is a gift Divine. Acts v. 31; xi. 18.

2. Repentance in its personal exercises is the act of man, who is accordingly commanded to repent.

3. What direction may Scripturally be given in exhorting sinners to repent? To review their lives and examine their hearts. To bring these to the touchstone of God's Word. To ask for Divine illumination and conviction. To yield to the Holy Spirit's painful yet merciful visitation.

"*Repentance*," says Mr. Wesley in his note on Matt. iii. 8, "is of two sorts; that which is termed *legal* and that which is styled *evangelical* repentance. The former, which is the same that is spoken of here, is a thorough conviction of sin. The latter is a change of heart (and consequently of life) from all sin to all holiness."

DR. J. HANNAH.

Incidents, Scenes, and Characters in the Acts of the Apostles.

BY THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER III.

PAUL ON MARS' HILL—Acts xvii. 22-31.

I. **THE PREACHER**—Paul; his competency in mental powers, educational attainments, and spiritual qualifications, to be the preacher on this occasion.

II. **THE PLACE WHERE HE PREACHED**—"Mars' Hill;" the place where the judges of Athens held their supreme council. In this place he stood, not sat, in boldness and confidence in his Lord, in his mission, and in the truth. Though a place of such antiquity, such grandeur, such associations, he feared not to stand forth in its very midst and preach the Gospel. A preacher of the Lord should fear no place in which he is called to proclaim his message.

III. **THE CONGREGATION.** This you will gather from the context. There were philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics making up a part (ver. 18). Besides these, there were persons, doubtless, of every class of the community, Jews, devout persons, such as met him in the market-place (ver 17). His congregation was in part intelligent, sceptical, idolatrous, stoical, wicked, curious, excitable, disputatious, scoffers. Variety in

mental, moral, and religious characters now make up congregations.

IV. Consider, chiefly, THE SERMON. 1. He attacks their *superstition, idolatry, and ignorance, in their religious worship* (ver. 25). 2. *He preached the true God.* "Him declare I unto you." (1.) *As the Creator of all things.* "God that made the world and all things therein." (2.) *As Ruler of all things.* "Seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth." (3.) *As a Spiritual Being.* "Dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Material buildings cannot contain Him; seeing He is Ruler or Lord of heaven and earth. (4.) *The spirituality of His worship.* "Neither is worshipped with men's hands." (5.) *As All-sufficient.* "As though He needed anything." All things and beings are His. He is owner of all things, and so He needeth nothing. (6.) *As the fountain of all things to His creatures.* "He giveth to all life and breath, and all things." (7.) *His impartiality.* "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." No high and low, no rich and poor, no bond and free, &c., among men in their creation by God or in His view and judgment of them. He is no respecter of persons. (8.) *His wisdom and benevolence.* "And hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation: That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him." Man, through sin, is estranged from God; but God loves him, and so orders things in His providence and grace that through a variety of agencies and means he may have if he will, feeling after God, and seeking Him, find Him. (9.) *His nearness.* "Though He be not far from every one of us." God has not gone from us: we are gone from Him, not in space or time, but in thought, feeling, &c. Had we but the feeling for Him, and did we seek Him, we should realise His immediate nearness. He is a God "nigh at hand, and not afar off." 3. Paul preached *man's relation to God.* "We are His offspring." 4. Man's dependence upon and existence in God. "In Him we live, move, and have our being." 5. He preached the *personality, life, intelligence, and fatherhood of God.* As though he had said, If we are His offspring—personal, living, intelligent children—He must, as our Father, be a Being of personality, life, &c., "and not like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." 6. He preached *the long-suffering of God.* "The times of this ignorance God winked at;" He suffered or endured. He was not hasty to punish what He saw to be ignorance instead of studied enmity. Thus Paul attacks the knowledge of these Epicurean philosophers, and speaks of it as ignorance before God. "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." 7. He preached *the commandment of God under the Gospel dis-*

pensation, "but now He commandeth all men everywhere to repent." "*Now*," Christ has come; "*Now*," the true light which lighteneth every man has shone on the world. "*Now*" the word of salvation is brought to you by me, an ambassador of the cross. Be ye sure of this, that "*now*" the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you; therefore the command from the King is, "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." 8. He preached the *last judgment as a reason for the necessity of repentance*. "Because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained." (1.) The judgment is fixed—appointed a day or a time. (2.) Fixed by Him who changes not; who, being the Lord of all, &c., &c., as He had preached, had a right to fix it. (3.) The Judge is ordained; "that Man," Jesus. No other man like Him; no other man competent; no other man would be submitted to. Hence, Paul calls Him *that Man*, to distinguish Him from all other men of all ages. He is God-man. (4.) The *character of the judgment is determined*, "in righteousness." The righteous God has arranged for this in the laws which shall guide the judgment. This is guaranteed in the character of the Judge. He is "Jesus Christ, the *righteous*." (5.) The *extent of the judgment is specified*, "the world." This includes all "nations, kindred, people, and tongues," making up the world. The argument of the apostle resting upon the judgment is this: Seeing God has determined to have this judgment, prepare for it by repentance. If you live and die without the Gospel light, what will be your doom in the *righteous* judgment? Now, your Father, in whom you live, move, and have your being, commands you in love to repent, so that in the judgment of the last day you may be found forgiven and accepted, and be counted worthy to dwell with Him in His family for ever. Were there no judgment to come, and no consequent reward or punishment, then you might eat, drink, and sleep in your ignorance and idolatry; but as there will be a judgment, God commands you to repent and be ready for it. 9. Paul preached the resurrection of Jesus as an evidence of His Divine ordination to the judgeship of the world on the day appointed. "He hath given assurance to all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." (1.) He hath raised Him from the dead for this purpose. (2.) By raising Him from the dead, He has shown His approval of Him as a proper person for this office. (3.) If any man wishes an evidence that Jesus Christ is the divinely-appointed Judge of the world for the last day, let him take His resurrection as that evidence; God means it to be such.

Conclusion. In this sermon of Paul on Mars' Hill we see how

wisely and wonderfully he adapts his subject to his hearers. He knew the views of the Epicureans, the Stoics, the Jews, and others; so he preaches such Scriptural doctrines concerning God, man, the judgment, Christ, and the resurrection, as were calculated to displace the opposite false notions from their minds.

In this Paul showed himself a "wise master-builder," and sets an example to all preachers of the word.

We see that learning and refinement, the knowledge of fine arts and philosophy, are no security against error, superstition, idolatry, and scoffing at religion. These people were not savages; they were Athenians.

Need we in our day go into Africa to find superstition and ignorance in relation to Christianity? Do we not find them in our own country, among the civilised and cultured, as well as among the untutored and unlearned? Nothing can preserve from error in doctrine, experience, and life, excepting the true knowledge and love of God as taught in His revealed word.

Expositions of some of the shorter Psalms.

BY THE REV. THORNLEY SMITH.

PSALM VIII.

THIS sublime Psalm was written by David, and the theme of it is the greatness and the goodness of the Lord Jehovah. It has been called a lyric ode on the first chapter of Genesis, or that chapter turned into a prayer for us. The title "upon Gittith" signifies either that it was sung to a tune, or accompanied by an instrument which originated from Gath, and, as all the Psalms to which this title is given are of a joyful character, it is probable that the tune or the instrument was a very cheerful one. But it is addressed "to the chief musician," an expression which stands at the head of fifty-three Psalms, and which signifies "to the precentor of the choir," and indicates that it was given to him to be prepared for those who, under his guidance, sang in the public services of the tabernacle.

This Psalm has no strophical arrangement, but is one noble burst of praise in an unbroken strain. Still we may divide it into two portions which treat respectively of the greatness and of the goodness of God, the first words being repeated at the close of the whole.

I. THE GREATNESS OF GOD (ver. 1-4). "O Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!" &c. Such is the language of multitudes of the human race. Men everywhere, who are right-minded, acknowledge God as their God, and they see His name—that is, His person, character, and perfections—everywhere displayed.

1. *In the earth.* How excellent is God's name as exhibited here! Look at the world in which you live. It is but one of many, and compared with some worlds it is small and insignificant; yet it speaks of the greatness of Jehovah to every listening ear. Its lofty mountains, its spacious valleys, its flowing rivers, and its great and wide sea, together with the innumerable productions of its soil, and its countless forms of animal and of insect life, must impress the mind of every student with the noblest ideas of the majesty of its Creator, leading him to say, "Lo, these are parts of His ways: but how little a portion is heard of Him?" (Job xxvi. 14.) To David the earth spoke of God's greatness, yet he knew little of it, for he had neither travelled far nor read books of travels; and as for the insect world, the vastness of which has been revealed by the microscope in modern times, he must have been comparatively ignorant of it. He was, however, an admirer of nature; and, no pantheist, he did not make nature God, but believed it to be a production of God's skill and power, and through it rose to Him in songs of praise. Was he not right? Is it not God's world in which we live? Has He not made it and fashioned it, and does not every creature in it speak of Him? Whatever other worlds may be, ours is a beautiful world, and but for sin, with which it is everywhere stained, would be one of the grandest portions of the great universe which God has made.

2. *In the heavens.* "Thou hast set Thy glory in the heavens," says the Psalmist; or, Thou hast crowned the heavens with Thy majesty." If the earth displays the excellence of God's name, how more the sun as he shines in his midday splendour, the moon as she walks in her nightly beauty, and the stars as they glitter in the sombre sky (ver. 3). David loved to contemplate the scene. When tending his father's flocks in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, he not unfrequently, perhaps, directed his attention to the heavens above him, and wondered at the glorious sight. Yet he probably knew nothing of the science of astronomy. He had not studied it, we should think, even as taught by the Chaldeans; and certainly of the modern astronomy he had no conception. That the sun is the centre of the planetary system; that our own and other worlds, with their attendant satellites, revolve around it in their several orbits; and *that the fixed stars are suns, the centres probably of other*

systems as large or larger than ours—of all this David knew nothing; yet he knew enough to see God everywhere, and in this respect was wiser than some of the astronomers of modern days. The greatest of modern astronomers, however—Kepler, and Newton, and Herschell, and others, were not sceptics, but worshippers of the true Jehovah, whose power they acknowledged and whose wisdom they adored. Let us tread in their steps, and not in the steps of those who can see neither on the earth beneath their feet, nor in the heavens above their head, either evidences of design or proofs of boundless power. Otherwise we shall be rebuked from a quarter whence we do not look for instruction. For, from the heavens, the Psalmist descends—

3. *To little children.* “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength,” &c. These are children up to the third year, and in them God prepares for Himself a power. By the enemy and the avenger are meant those who oppose themselves to the Divine government, or the fierce and calumniating foes of revelation. Against these God has set up a mighty bulwark, “for the foundation of which,” says Luther, “He has taken the stammering of little children.” And it is a fact that even babes and little children are filled with delight as they look upon the earth, as they are brought into the light, and as they gaze upon the starry heavens. Have you never seen an infant child display the highest joy at the sight of a frisking lamb, of a beautiful flower, or of the crescent moon? And thus such a child puts the scoffer to shame and the sceptic to silence; and by the simple faith of an infant just learning to speak has many a proud philosopher been condemned. Think of the remarkable application made of this passage by our Lord. He had entered the temple of Jerusalem amid the plaudits of the people, and there were little children there crying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” But the Pharisees were angry, and said, somewhat scornfully, “Hearest Thou what these say?” “Yea,” was His reply; “have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?” Our Lord quoted the Septuagint translation of the Psalm, but the meaning was the same, and the Pharisees were thus rebuked. Thus it still is. God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty (1 Cor. i. 27); and as one has said, “It is by obscure and naturally feeble instruments that He makes His name glorious here below, and overcomes whatsoever is opposed to this glorifying.” O, ye sceptics, ye scoffers, ye proud philosophers of the day, who cannot see God in the magnificent temple of His works, the very children shall condemn you and put you to the blush; and if you do not humble yourselves ere long, the day shall come when God will be avenged on you, and when you will be compelled both to see and to confess His power.

II. THE GOODNESS OF GOD (ver. 4-9). At the goodness of God as manifested towards man, the Psalmist is surprised. When he considers the heavens in their vastness, he is lost in wonder that a God so great should have respect to man, who is so mean and insignificant. Yet so it is, and the goodness of God to man is displayed—

1. *In His thinking upon him.* “What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?” God’s love is such that, passing as it were by all the starry hosts, it condescends to take notice of a puny mortal, and tenderly to provide for all his wants. Nor is it of the human race as a whole that Jehovah is mindful, but of every individual of the human race. Each member of that race, whatever his country, nation, or language, is thought of and cared for by the Universal Father. You may be poor and despised and forgotten by others, but He remembers you even when you do not remember Him. Yes, God thinks of you every day; and you may say, as did David in another Psalm, “How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.” (Ps. cxxxix. 17, 18.) And, thinking of you, He visits you, sometimes it may be to chastise, but then, as always, to comfort and to bless, so that you may say with David again, “Thy gentleness hath made me great.” (Ps. xviii. 35.) But *does* God think of you? Then ought you to think of Him. Does He often visit you? Then ought you to visit oft His house, the throne of grace, His poor and afflicted people. O that men did not forget God, for then would He think of them indeed, and then, having fellowship with Him, they would never feel themselves alone.

2. *In highly honouring him.* “Thou hast made him,” says David, “a little lower than the angels,” &c. The word here used is *Elohim*, so that some render “a little lower than God.” Man was made in the Divine image, but so also were the angels, so that the Psalmist may here have viewed him as only a little less than angelic. Calvin says the meaning is, “Thou bestowest on him an almost super-earthly dignity.” And it is really so. Man is the highest and noblest of all creatures inhabiting this lower world. Look at his erect form, his lofty mien, his upward glance, his powers of speech, reason, and understanding. How little less is he than a god! Kingly dignity is his. He is crowned with glory and honour. He is God’s deputy. He is, as Lord Bacon called him, “the high priest and interpreter of nature.” He is a fallen being, it is true, but he still bears the stamp and impress of his pristine dignity, and from the dust into which he has fallen, grace can lift him up. Is it not sad that he should often make himself so mean? He dishonours himself by denying that he was created, as the Bible says he

was, by an immediate act of Divine power, and by affirming that he is only a superior animal, or a development of a species of baboon. He dishonours himself by transgressing the Divine laws, by violating the principles of truth and justice, and by plunging into the mire of sin. And he dishonours himself by resting satisfied with earthly things, when he ought to be aspiring to that higher state of being of which he is the destined heir. If man would but assert the dignity of his nature and live worthily of it, how great he would speedily become!

3. *In the dominion over all things* which God has assigned him (ver. 6-9). All nature is here said to be under man's control; but, at present, man is not the absolute lord of nature, and the passage therefore looks back upon his original dignity as described in Gen. ii., and forward to what he will hereafter be when God's purposes of mercy are fulfilled. Accordingly the Psalm is quoted in Heb. ii. 6-8. Now, what is the meaning of these words? It is evidently this: "We do not yet see man the supreme lord of nature; but what do we see? We see Jesus—the man Christ Jesus—who for a little time was made lower than the angels that He might suffer death on man's behalf, now crowned with such glory and honour that all things are put under His feet." In His person, then, human nature is already on the throne, and is possessed of absolute dominion over all created things. The inference is that man himself, redeemed and sanctified by the blood of Christ, shall hereafter attain this dominion, and shall be, in this as in other respects, like his Lord. The Psalm, then, is prophetic. It tells what the believer is to be. It points to the time referred to in the sublime predictions of Isaiah xi. 6-9; and it looks forward even beyond the millennial age to an eternity of bliss, when man, made "for a little time," as the Psalm is there quoted, "inferior to the angels," shall become, as our Lord foretold, "equal to the angels," and shall dwell for ever in the temple of everlasting light. Is it asked, By what means will man be thus exalted? The answer is, By the cross of Christ, which is to lift him out of his present degradation, and to place him on his Saviour's throne.

Thus the greatness of God in His goodness towards man is the theme on which the Psalmist dwells; and the Psalm concludes, as it began, with a note of holy praise. "O Jehovah, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!"



The Biblical Expositor.

"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"—Rom. viii. 32.

HE—rather, "He surely." It is a pity to lose the emphatic particle of the original—*that spared not*—"withheld not," "kept not back." This expressive phrase, as well as the whole thought, is suggested by Gen. xxii. 12, where Jehovah's touching commendation of Abraham's conduct regarding his son Isaac seems designed to furnish something like a glimpse into the spirit of His own act in *surrendering* His own son. "Take now (said the Lord to Abraham) thy son, thine *only*, whom thou lovest, and . . . offer him for a burnt offering" (Gen. xxii. 2); and only when Abraham had all but performed that loftiest act of self-sacrifice, the Lord interposed, saying, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou **HAST NOT WITHHELD THY SON, THINE ONLY SON**, from Me." In the light of this incident, then, and of this language, our apostle can mean to convey nothing less than this, that in "not sparing His own Son, but delivering Him up," or surrendering Him, God exercised, in His *paternal* character, a mysterious act of *self-sacrifice*, which, though involving none of the *pain* and none of the *loss* which are inseparable from the very idea of self-sacrifice on our part, was not less real, but, on the contrary, as far transcended any such acts of ours as His nature is above the creature's. But this is inconceivable if Christ be not God's "own (or, proper) Son," partaker of His very nature, as really as Isaac was of his father Abraham's. In that sense, certainly, the Jews charged our Lord with making Himself "equal with God" (John v. 18), which He in reply forthwith proceeded, not to disown, but to illustrate and confirm. Understand Christ's sonship thus, and the language of Scripture regarding it is intelligible and harmonious; but take it to be an *artificial* relationship, ascribed to Him in virtue either of His miraculous birth, or His resurrection from the dead, or the grandeur of His works, or all of these together, and the passages which speak of it neither explain of themselves nor harmonise with each other. *Delivered Him up*—not to *death* merely (as many take it), for that is too narrow an idea here, but "surrendered Him" in the most comprehensive sense; comp. John iii. 16, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son." *For us all*—that is, for all believers alike; as nearly every good interpreter admits must be the meaning here. *How shall He not*—how can we conceive that He should

not. *With Him also*—rather, “also with Him.” The word “also” is often so placed in our version as to obscure the sense: see Heb. xii. 1. *Freely give us all things?*—all other gifts being not only immeasurably *less* than this Gift of gifts, but virtually *included in it*.—Dr. D. Brown.

Materials for Sermons.

XV.—THE OBJECT OF FAITH.

“Looking unto Jesus.”—HEB. xii. 2.

ONLY three words; but these three words contain the whole secret of life.

“Looking unto Jesus” *in the Scriptures*, to learn who He is, what He has done, what He gives, what He requires; to find in His character our pattern, in His teachings our instruction, in His precepts our law, in His promises our stay, in His person and in His work a full satisfaction offered to every want of our souls.

“Looking unto Jesus” *crucified*, to find in His blood poured out our ransom, our pardon, our peace.

“Looking unto Jesus” *risen again*, to find in Him that righteousness which alone can justify us, and through which, unworthy though we are, we may draw near with full assurance in His name, unto Him who is His Father and our Father, His God and our God.

“Looking unto Jesus” *glorified*, to find in Him our Advocate with the Father, making complete through His intercession the merciful work of our salvation; appearing even now in the presence of God for us, and supplying the weakness of our prayers by the power of those which the Father heareth always.

“Looking unto Jesus” *as revealed to us by the Holy Ghost*, to find in constant communion with Him the cleansing of our sin-stained hearts, the illumination of our darkened minds, the transformation of our perverse wills; to the end that we may triumph over the world and the devil—resisting their violence through Jesus our strength, bringing their devices to naught

through Jesus our wisdom ; upheld by the sympathy of Jesus, who was Himself tempted in all things ; and by the help of Jesus, who resisted and conquered.

“ Looking unto Jesus,” *that we may receive from Him the work and the cross of each day*, with the grace which is sufficient to bear the cross and to do the work ; patient through His patience ; active by His activity ; loving with His love ; asking not, “ What can I do ? ” but, “ What can He not do ? ” relying upon His strength, which is made perfect in weakness.

“ Looking unto Jesus,” *that the brightness of His face may enlighten our darkness* ; that our joy may be holy and our grief subdued ; that He may humble us to exalt us in due time ; that He may afflict and then comfort us ; that He may strip us of our righteousness to enrich us with His own ; that He may teach us how to pray, and may answer our prayers ; so that, while we are in the world, we may not be of the world, our life being hid with Him in God, and our works bearing Him witness before men.

“ Looking unto Jesus,” *who has reascended to His Father’s house to prepare a place for us* ; that this blessed hope may give us courage to live without murmuring, and to die without regret when the day shall come to meet the last enemy whom He has conquered for us, whom we shall conquer through Him ; once the King of terrors—now the messenger of everlasting peace.

Unto Jesus, *and not unto ourselves*, to our thoughts, our wishes, our plans ; unto Jesus, and not unto the world, its allurements, its examples, its maxims, its opinions ; unto Jesus, and not unto Satan, whether he tries to affright us with his rage, or to seduce us by his flatteries.

Unto Jesus, *and not unto our meditations and prayers*, to our religious conversations and edifying books ; not to the assemblies of the faithful which we frequent, nor even to the participation of the Supper of our Lord. Let us make a faithful use of all these means of grace ; but let us not confound them with grace itself, or turn away our eyes from Him who alone can make them effectual by giving Himself to us through their means.

Unto Jesus, *and not to our standing in the Christian Church*, to the name we bear, to the doctrine we profess, to the opinion that others have of our piety, or to that which we ourselves entertain. Many who have prophesied in the name of Christ

shall one day hear Him say, "I never knew you;" but He will confess before His Father and His angels even the humblest of those who have looked unto Him.

Unto Jesus, and *not to our brethren*; not even to the best and most beloved among them. If we follow a man, we run the risk of losing our way; but if we follow Jesus, we are certain that we shall never go astray.

Unto Jesus, and *not to the obstacles we meet in our path*. From the moment that we stop to consider them, they astonish and unnerve us, and cast us down; incapable as we are of comprehending either the reason why they are permitted, or the means by which we may overcome them. The apostle began to sink as soon as he turned to look at the boisterous billows; but so long as he continued looking unto Jesus, he walked upon the waves as upon a rock. The harder our task, and the heavier our cross, the more it behoves us to look to Jesus only.

Unto Jesus, and *not to the temporal blessings which we enjoy*. By looking first at these blessings, we run the risk of being so much captivated by them that they even hide from our view Him who gives them.

Unto Jesus, and *not to our own strength*, for with that we can only glorify ourselves. To glorify God we need the strength of God.

Unto Jesus, and *not to our weakness*. Have we ever become stronger by lamenting our weakness? But if we look unto Jesus, His strength shall fortify our hearts, and we shall break forth into songs of praise.

Unto Jesus, and *not to our sins*. The contemplation of sin brings only death; the contemplation of Jesus brings life. It was not by looking at their wounds, but by beholding the brazen serpent, that the Israelites were healed.

Unto Jesus, and *not to the law*. The law gives us its commands, but does not impart the strength necessary to obey them. The law always condemns, it never pardons. To be under the law is to be out of the reach of grace.

Unto Jesus, and *not to what we are doing for Him*. If we are too much taken up with our work, we may forget our Master; we may have our hands full, and our heart empty; but if we are constantly looking unto Jesus, we cannot forget our work;

if our heart is filled with His love, our hands will also be active in His service.

Unto Jesus, and *not to the apparent success of our efforts.* Apparent success is not always the measure of real success; and besides, God has not enjoined success upon us, but only labour; He will ask an account of our labour, but not of our success—why, then, should we be too much concerned about it? We must sow the seed, God will gather the fruit; if not to-day, it will be to-morrow; if not for us, it will be for others. Even if success were to be granted us, it would always be dangerous to look complacently upon it; on the one hand, we are tempted to claim for ourselves some of the glory—on the other, we are too prone to slacken our zeal when we cease to see good results arising from it; that is, at the very time when we ought to put forth double energy. To look at our success, is to walk by sight; to look unto Jesus, and to persevere in following and in serving Him, despite all discouragements, is to walk by faith.

Unto Jesus, and *not to the gifts that we have received, or are now receiving from Him.* As to the grace of yesterday, it has been withdrawn with the work of yesterday; we can use it no longer; we ought not to dwell upon it any longer. As to the grace of to-day, given for the work of to-day, it is entrusted to us, not to be contemplated, but to be used—not to be paraded that we appear rich, but to be employed at once, that we may, in our poverty, look unto Jesus.

Unto Jesus, and *not to the liveliness of our joy, or the fervour of our love.*

Unto Jesus, and *not to our faith.* The last artifice of Satan, when he cannot lead us out of the way, is to turn our eyes away from Jesus to look at our faith—and so discourage us if it is weak, to puff us up if it is strong; and, in either case, to weaken us. For it is not our faith which makes us strong, but it is Jesus, through faith; we are not strengthened by contemplating our faith, but by looking unto Jesus.

“Looking unto Jesus” during all the time which is allotted us here below—unto Jesus ever anew, without allowing either the remembrance of the past or the cares of an unknown future to distract our thoughts—unto Jesus now, if we have never looked unto Him—unto Jesus again, if we have ceased to do so—unto Jesus alone, unto Jesus still, unto Jesus always, with a

more fixed and steadfast gaze, "changed into the same image from glory to glory;" and thus waiting for the hour when He will call us to pass from earth to heaven, and from time to eternity—the promised, the blessed hour, when at last we shall be "like unto Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

ADOLPHE MONOD.

XVI.—THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

"For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. v. 20.

SCRIBES, or writers. This art they used as a profession. There were two classes—civil and ecclesiastical. No doubt the Scribes mentioned in our text were of the ecclesiastical order. They were not a distinct sect, for some of them were Pharisees.

The Pharisees were a distinct sect of the Jews. They were more correct theologically than were the Sadducees. Acts xxiii. 8. The Pharisees were strict observers of the Mosaic ritual, and held most tenaciously the traditions of the fathers. Yet they were hypocrites, making broad their phylacteries, seeking human applause, distinguished titles, and public salutations. Pride and hypocrisy were their prominent characteristics. Therefore they are not examples for our imitation. "For I say unto you, that except," &c. Observe—

I. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

1. *Its nature.*

(1.) It was a carnal righteousness. Carnal in the extreme. Their moral nature was not renewed. They were depraved in their morals. Matt. xxiii. 15. They professed to be saints, but lived like sinners. Matt. xxiii. 13.

(2.) It was an external righteousness. How devout they were, praying, fasting, and giving alms; but they rested in the mere externals of religion, and were totally indifferent to the power. Matt. xxiii. 27.

(3.) It was a self-righteousness. Never did men think more of themselves, and never had men less cause. They thought themselves the only favourites of heaven. How deceived they were.

"What is all the righteousness that men devise?
 What, but a sordid bargain for the skies?
 But Christ as soon would abdicate His own,
 As stoop from heaven to sell the proud a throne."—*Cowper.*

2. *Its manifestation.* It was manifest—

(1.) In their pride. They made extraordinary pretensions to righteousness. Titus i. 16. How odious and detestible! Matt. xxiii. 13. It was manifest—

(2.) In their love of praise. They sought diligently the praise of men. This they secured, for the common people held them in the highest veneration and esteem. It was manifest—

(3.) In their hatred to others. Paul speaks of them as being "contrary to all men." 1 Thess. ii. 15. They regarded uncircumcised heathens with sovereign contempt. It was manifest—

(4.) In their displeasing God. Who could be more offensive to God? They were perfect hypocrites. The name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles through them. Rom. ii. 24. How often hath religion been scandalised for the want of consistency in its professors—scandalised by heathens, by infidels, and by ungodly men?

Let us observe—

II. IN WHAT RESPECTS YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS MUST EXCEED THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES.

It must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees—

1. *In its nature.*

(1.) It must be spiritual. You must not be carnal, but spiritual. Rom. viii. 6. True righteousness is purity, freedom from moral pollution. Rom. viii. 1.

(2.) It must be internal as well as external. You must be changed inwardly and outwardly by the Holy Spirit. Yours must be an universal righteousness. You are to keep all the commandments of God, to adorn in all things the Gospel of God, and give full proof to all that you are actuated by the love of God. Your righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees—

In its fruits. It must produce—

1. Humility. You must sit at the feet of Christ, and learn only of Him. Matt. xi. 29. Watch against spiritual pride.

Seek to be humble. Do not feign it. Let it be genuine. True humility is unfeigned, and is wrought within by the Holy Ghost. Job xlii. 5, 6. It must produce—

(2.) Love to others. Love, not merely to your particular friends or relations, but to *all the children of God*. Love is reciprocal. Dr. Doddridge one day asked his little daughter how it was that everybody loved her. “I know not,” said she, “unless it be that I love everybody.” Love for sinners. Let it be your constant and earnest endeavour to secure their salvation. It must produce—

(3.) Holiness of heart and life. This is what is meant by true righteousness. Luke x. 27. “This do, and thou shalt live.” For “this is the sum of Christian perfection.” It must produce—

(4.) A desire to glorify God. Fear God. Do all to please and glorify God. 1 Cor. x. 31. Seek to do not merely what you can do, but what you should do—all that is in harmony with the Divine will.

Let us pass on to notice—

III. THE POWERFUL ADMONITION. “For I say unto you,” &c. Here we observe two statements—one given, the other implied. Let us observe—

1. *The statement given.* If your righteousness exceeds not the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you cannot in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. There is no heaven but for new-born souls—souls “renewed in righteousness and true holiness.” The Pharisees were hypocrites, and if you do not exceed them you are hypocrites too; and all hypocrites “shall have their portion in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.” No heaven. Nothing but “a fearful looking for,” &c. We observe—

2. *The statement implied.* If your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Nothing can hinder your entrance, if the subjects of true righteousness and true holiness. 2 Peter i. 10, 11. If your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, it will be observable in the following things:—

(1.) God will be in all your thoughts.

(2.) You will diligently attend the means of grace.

(3.) You will value the favour of God above all things.

(4.) You will earnestly prepare, and calmly wait, for an entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

In conclusion, we address—

1. The righteous. How excellent is true religion. "She is more precious than rubies," &c. Hold fast whereunto you have attained. "Be faithful unto death," &c.

2. The self-righteous. You have too exalted views of yourself. You are climbing too high. Oh, make haste and come down. You are not climbing, like Zaccheus, to look at Christ, but to look at yourself. How foolish! How wicked!

3. Those who have no righteousness at all. Better no righteousness than self-righteousness. Better in the world than acting the part of an hypocrite. But, oh, remember your souls. Prepare for heaven! Your righteousness cannot exceed, &c., for you have none. Seek righteousness. Seek it in Christ. Believe and be saved.

J. B. HOBBERY.

XVII.—SAVING OTHERS.

"Others save."—JUDE 23.

God often employs instrumentalities to effect His designs. By Him means apparently the most unlikely, unsuitable, and unlooked for are employed. We often see a great similarity existing between the cause or occasion of evil and the remedy employed to promote a cure. A serpent was placed on a pole, looking unto which cured the Israelites when serpent-bitten. By the first Adam death came, by the second Adam—Jesus—death is abolished, and life and immortality brought to light. Man needs salvation. Man is to save man. Not pardon him; his pardon is procured. May point him to the source of pardon. Not open heaven's door—Jesus has done that; but tell man of it, lead him into the way, warn him of the folly and danger of not being saved. Jude is exhorting to perseverance in the Christian life. He exhorts them to remember the Israelites, who although saved from Egypt, through unbelief died in the wilderness (ver. 5). And as one means of keeping themselves in the love of God, they also are to save others. This text supposes three things.

I. THAT SOME ARE SAVED.

1. *Those to whom the apostle wrote.* Is evident from the

epistle: would not exhort them to save others if they were not saved. All who seek to save others should be saved themselves.

2. *Some have been saved since.*

3. *Some are saved now.* They are everywhere, of all ages, classes, and circumstances.

4. *Saved by grace through faith.* Know it; are witnesses to Christ's power to save.

5. *Some saved in heaven.* But not so many saved as ought to be, as may be.

II. THAT OTHERS MAY BE SAVED. "Others save."

1. *Christ died to accomplish this.* This was the grand object which brought Him into our world. Every act of His life tended to this. His doings said, "The Son of Man is come to seek and save the lost." Those who felt His power to save were convinced that "Christ Jesus came into the world," &c. This raised the hopes of ancient Jews, filled the pen with words of bygone seers, and sustained the faith of ages, "until, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

2. *The Bible declares it.* Here repeatedly this subject gleams forth in glowing truths. "There is no difference," &c. (Rom. x., 12, 13). The conditions here stated are repentance and faith (Rom. x. 9).

3. *God desires it.* "God hath not appointed us to wrath," &c. (1 Thess. v. 9); "who will have all men to be saved." &c. (1 Tim. ii. 4). God shows His desire for our salvation in the *gift of His Son*. He could give no greater gift. The *strivings of His Spirit*. At times you feel all is not right, and you are led to wish all was. He who plants these desires there thus tells thee He desires thy salvation. *The accusings of conscience.* When you have done wrong something tells you that it is wicked. He who placed within thee this invisible silent monitor thus urges thee to be saved. *Thy prolonged life.* Thou art a sinner. Why does not God punish thy sin? He spares thee to induce thee to embrace salvation. Hell was not prepared for thee, but for devils Jesus is preparing heaven for thee, and He wishes thee to enter there; and He lets thee live, and by one continued effort strives to induce thee to prepare for heaven. That man may be saved, may be inferred from—

4. *The rewards promised to those who save others.* "He that winneth souls is wise." God hath said that the least favour

conferred upon His children—even a cup of water—shall be rewarded; and will not He then reward the saving of a soul? Paul believed this (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20; Phil. ii. 16); Daniel thought this (Dan. xii. 3); James says: “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth,” &c. (v. 19, 20).

III. THAT IT IS OUR DUTY TO SAVE OTHERS.

Here is a twofold duty urged. Not only “keep yourselves in the love of God,” but also “others save.” Some people desire a revival, but it is to swell the ranks of their society. This is poor religion! The first duty is neglected. “Keep yourselves in the love of God” by faith and prayer (verse 20), and your motive will be pure.

“I might be of use if I could preach to an audience,” says one. A harder, grander, nobler kind of preaching is to recommend Jesus to *one* person—a person alone.

Try to save them—

1. *Compassionately*, “of some” (verse 22). Be gentle with them. Beseech them to be reconciled to God.

2. *Tremblingly*, “with fear,” &c. (verse 23). Trembling while you save them, because of their great danger, “pulling them out of the fire.” This will lead you to work—

3. *Earnestly*. Never give up trying. When wooing fails, threaten them. Some don’t like threatening. Paul speaks of “warning every man.”

4. *Fully*. “Hating even the garment,” &c. Tell them all their privilege. Urge them to live holily, so that Jesus may present them faultless (verse 24).

Sinner, you may have salvation. You may be saved fully.

Christian, see your duty to save souls. Think of your privilege to save men. Labour for this. And even when you have tried to your uttermost, you will feel like one of old, who, when dying, said, “Two things press most upon me now—one, my chiefest joy that Christ has done so much for me; the other, my deepest sorrow that I have done so little for Christ.”

G. J. REEVE.

Chatham, Canada.



Divisions of Texts.

REVERENCING THE SON.

"They will reverence my Son."—MATT. xxi. 37.

SUBJECT: *It might have been presumed that when the Son of God came into the world, men would reverence Him and receive Him kindly.*

This may appear from the following considerations:—1. The Divinity and glory of His highest nature; 2. The perfect excellence of His character as man; 3. The reasonableness of His claims; 4. The condescending kindness of His intentions; 5. The beauty, grandeur, and wisdom of His teachings; 6. His ability to bless and save; 7. His ability to destroy as well as save; 8. Their great necessities, and His power to supply them.

Conclusion: 1. The sinner's final ruin is unnecessary; 2. His ruin is of himself; 3. His ruin is deliberate.—D. A. Clark.

SAVING FAITH.

"And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."—LUKE i. 45.

The subject of the text is *saving faith*.

I. In the simplicity of its nature. Taking God at His word. Believing.

II. In the importance of its objects—"the things which are told us of the Lord."

III. In the sufficiency of its grounds. The veracity, the ability, and the willingness of the Lord to do as He has said.

IV. In the propriety of its acts. Its acts are compared to the look of the eye, the hold of the hand, the repose of the heart, &c.

V. In the benefits of its exercise. "Blessed is she that believeth; for there shall be a performance." The promise shall be fulfilled, the blessings shall be given, &c., &c.—William Dawson.

Illustration.

Saving faith between the Saviour and the sinner is so taking Him at His word as to influence my choice and regulate my conduct; and if it does not do so, it does not deserve the name of faith at all. Suppose I were to inform a man that if he were to go in a certain direction he would get to a place where he would be robbed and murdered; and suppose he said to me very gravely, "Yes, I believe you; I believe you," and yet went straight forward: should I say he *did* believe me? He might *say* he believed me; but when I saw him going that way, and heard afterwards that he was robbed

and murdered, should not I be convinced that he *did* not believe me? We may say a hundred and a thousand times over, "I believe, I believe, I believe;" but we have no saving faith unless we so believe with the heart as to influence our choice and regulate our conduct.—*W. Dawson.*

A CLEAN HEART AND A RIGHT SPIRIT.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."—PSALM li. 10.

I. THE EXTENT OF THIS PETITION. He prays for a clean heart; which implies—

1. Deliverance from sinful and unholy desires.
2. Deliverance from impure affections.
3. Deliverance from evil thoughts.

The Psalmist also prays for a "right spirit." The least which can be implied here is that he might be delivered from a *wrong* spirit.

1. A *murmuring, fretful, discontented* spirit.
2. Deliverance from an *angry* spirit.
3. From a *proud* spirit.
4. From an *envious* spirit.
5. From an *unbelieving* spirit.
6. From a *worldly* spirit.

II. IS THERE ANY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THIS MAY BE REALISED BY US? Yes.

1. Because the text is the *inspired* prayer of David. Would the Lord inspire a prayer which could not be answered?

2. Because there are certain duties enjoined by God which we cannot perform without this. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," &c.

3. Christ has died to procure this grace.

4. Others have lived in this grace before us.

III. HOW SHALL WE PROCEED IN ORDER THAT WE MAY OBTAIN THIS GRACE? We must do as David did—*pray.*

1. With a deep conviction of our need of the blessing.

2. With a believing recognition and trust in the Great Mediator.

3. There must be a giving up of all sin.

4. Exercise faith now. (1.) That it is *promised.* (2.) That God is able and willing to give it through Christ.—*Rev. James Cooke.*



GENEROSITY is the conferring of benefits upon others beyond what they could claim.—*Isaac Taylor.*

Open-air Services.

THE KING'S COMMAND.

"Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage."—MATT. xxii. 9.

OPEN-AIR preachers are servants of the Great King; they obey the command, and go out into the highways, and bid all men to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And are they not justified in doing so? Scripture warrants it. Our Master Himself, and the apostles, were open-air preachers. The command given is very pointed. *The servants of the King are commanded to go out into the highways.* Are the churches awake to this primitive mode of preaching the Gospel? Are all the gifts bestowed upon members of some churches exhausted in other work, so that this must be left undone? How is it that this work is not more generally attended to by the servants of the Great King? Is it not high time that the Christian churches of England entered more zealously into this work? *Souls are perishing, because the servants of the King neglect to make known His will.* The world is the domain of our King; but His Gospel has been heard by comparatively few of its inhabitants. Yet the King wants His servants in the churches to look after the whole world. The Greeks after a siege of ten years took Troy; but far greater results would follow organised Christian effort in open-air preaching in less time than that. The wayfaring man would be bidden to a royal marriage feast. The careless and indifferent would be warned of their danger. The invitation would be addressed to all. In the parable, the Jew first had a welcome, but unbelief blinded their eyes and they declined the offer. The second time they refused to come. "They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise; and the remnant took His servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them." The King, seeing His message thus disdained, commanded His servants to go out into the highways and bid all they could find to come in to the marriage. And why? Because all who are shut out of the banqueting-house of the King must perish, and the King is "merciful and gracious, and willeth not that any should perish." For this reason the Gospel is preached. *The Gospel*

can be preached in the "highways," where souls are perishing. This fact is sufficient to stir us up to active service. Much is done in London by the Open-air Mission. A vast amount of work is marked out for this society to accomplish; every year numbers of services are held, and thousands of tracts are distributed. It is a great voluntary effort that is made by the members, and is only done by much self-denial and sacrifice on their part.

In many large towns in England and Wales, and throughout Scotland, regular services are held. The mode of conducting these services, of course, varies. As a rule, short addresses are preferable to sermons, especially in towns, where hearers come and go. These addresses ought to be well filled up with illustrations, and a good stock of anecdote is very useful. Good singing is needed, and short prayers.

So long as a thoroughfare is not obstructed, a meeting can be held. The work has the help and sympathy of many noble lords and many members of parliament, and other influential personages. The press, too, is generally in favour, but very apt to criticise. To the writers of some of the articles in the daily press, the open-air preacher is always wrong in his pronunciation. M. Taine, a celebrated French writer, has lately given the readers of a Paris paper an idea of an English open-air preacher. We are highly honoured in this respect, for this distinguished man often listened to these servants of the Lord. This is a marvel, for Frenchmen, as a rule, do not. The criticism of M. Taine is not adverse; it is characteristic, he says, of Englishmen to carry on a laborious work, and look for no reward. An opportunity, he says, "is offered to give vent to one's feelings," which is needed, "or else religious melancholy would set in." It is not many Methodists or Baptists that die of religious melancholy; for if they want to preach Christ, they find out a platform somewhere. And they do it. Why? Because they are commanded by their Master.

The time for holding open-air services is now come, and an opportunity afforded of inviting sinners to the Gospel feast. Spring-time with all its charms, the young bud, the tender blade, the opening flower, the singing of birds, call us forth to work for God. Nature herself is a preacher. The whole work of Gospel preaching is not included by having it rung out within four walls, but it is to be proclaimed also under the open canopy

of heaven. Let the work be done right heartily, and we need not fear the results. Much prayer and consecration is wanted to enable the preacher to reach the ear of the sinner, so that his work may, by the Divine blessing, sink down in the heart. We must persevere, plough the ground and sow the seed, and wait patiently for the "increase." "We shall reap if we faint not." Sinners will be brought to Christ, and God will be glorified —

"Who now is reviving His work in our days,
And mightily striving to save us by grace."

JOHN ROBERTS.

Thoughts about Jesus.

BY A PREACHER.

IT is said by John the apostle that the miracle of turning the water into wine by Jesus was the "manifestation of His glory." Yes, the *manifestation*, not the *beginning*. It was the beginning of His miracles and the *manifestation* of His glory. The glory was in Him before the miracle was wrought, or no miracle would have been wrought. The rising of the sun is the manifestation of light which was in the sun before it rose, lightning is the manifestation of electricity which existed before such manifestation, the speech of wisdom is the manifestation of wisdom which existed before the speech. So the miracles of Jesus were the *manifestations* of a glory which dwelt within Him before the miracles were performed.

"JESUS WEPT." If God put the tears of David in His bottle, what must He have done with the tears of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son? I wonder the Roman Catholics, with all the precious relics of Jesus and the saints which they pretend to have, have none of the tears of the Man of Sorrows!

True believers have that which is far more precious than the tears of Jesus, they have His sympathy and love; yea, they have Himself dwelling in them, the hope of glory.

THE man who says, "Lo, Christ is here in my church, in my house, in my life," and thereby implies that He is not in any other

church, &c., lies, and speaks not the truth. It is a libel upon the blessed Saviour of the world. *Whosoever* calleth upon Him is saved. *Wherever* two or three are gathered in His name, there He is in the midst of them.

It is not they who have most to say of Jesus to whom He is always most precious. It was said, He should not cry nor His voice be heard in the streets. His Spirit and Life comprise the great voice coming through the ages down to us, convincing the world of His purity and power. So with His people. It is not so much the *loud* confession of words as the Christ-like spirit and life that show Him and awaken men to an acknowledgment of the Divinity of His religion.

JESUS, as a teacher, only taught those things which man had not power to discover; or, having power, had not a will—the things necessary to man's spiritual purity and eternal glorification. Other things, not bearing upon these, and which lay within his reach of diligence, He left to man to discover in the ways and means he thought best.

JESUS, as He in whom dwelt *all* knowledge and wisdom, could have taught all the sciences, and histories, and philosophies, as no other teacher ever could. He who spread out the heavens could have taught astronomy to perfection. He who made the earth could have taught geography without a defect. And so of all. But this did not come within His province. What was within the power of man He left that power to seek and acquire.

JESUS, as God, created all things containing the sciences, &c., and gave man the power to seek the knowledge of them, and left it with his option whether he would. So, as Mediator, He revealed in His teachings, personally and by His Spirit, the things which contain salvation, giving him the power in His Spirit to seek the knowledge of them, and leaving to his *will* whether he does so or no.

WE ask much, we think, from Jesus, for such sinners as we are; but Jesus oftentimes gives us more than we ask. He answers according to His royal bounty and Divine beneficence. *Illustration*—the dying thief prayed that Jesus would remember him when He came into His kingdom. He answered, Thou shalt be *with Me*—much more than *remembering*. Thou shalt be with *Me this day*; the poor man had his mind upon *some indefinite period*.

THE distinguishing doctrines of Christianity are to be found rather in the Epistles than in the Gospels. But the perfect exemplification of them in life is to be found in the Gospels and not in the Epistles. Men could be inspired to write and speak them, but not to *live* them. Hence, Jesus *lived* Christianity in all its fulness of truth, though He did not teach it in all its fulness. He did in His Divine-human life what the apostles and even angels could not have done; and the apostles did in teaching what He could have done, but what He did not do.

CHRISTIANITY, while it may include the doctrines concerning God in His Fatherhood and supremacy, chiefly consists in the heart, in its experience, and in the life in its practice, both revolving around Jesus as their centre, connected with Him by the faith which is of the operation of the Spirit.

Pulpit Illustrations.

THE WORLD PASSETH AWAY.

"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof."—1 JOHN ii. 17.

SOME years since a vessel lay becalmed on a smooth sea, in the vicinity of an iceberg. In full view the mountain mass of frozen splendour rose before the passengers of the vessel, its towers and pinnacles glittering in the sun's light, and clothed in the enchanting and varied colours of the rainbow. A party on board the vessel resolved to climb the steep sides of the iceberg, and spend the day in a pic-nic on the summit. The novelty and attraction of the hazardous enterprise blinded them to the danger; and they left the vessel, ascended the steep mountain of ice, spread their table on the summit, and enjoyed their dance of pleasure on the surface of the frosty marble. Nothing disturbed their security or marred their enjoyment. Their sport was finished, and they made their way down to the water level and embarked. But scarcely had they reached a safe distance before the loud crash of the crumbling mass was heard. The scene of their gaiety was covered, the huge fragments of the falling pinnacles and the giant iceberg rolled over with a shock that sent a thrill of awe and terror to the breast of every spectator. Not one of that gay party could be induced to try that rash experiment again.

But what is this world, with all its brilliancy, with all its hopes, and its alluring pleasures, but a glittering iceberg melting slowly away? Its false splendour, enchanting to the eye, dissolves, and as drop after drop trickles down its sides or steals unseen through its hidden pores, its very foundations are undermined, and the steady decay prepares for a sudden catastrophe. Such is the world to many who dance over its surface, and in a false security forget the treacherous footing on which they stand. But can anyone who knows what it is avoid feeling that every moment is pregnant with danger, and that the final catastrophe is hastening on?

UNDYING GUILT.

"A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."—GEN. iv. 12.

THERE is a tradition that our Saviour, when on the way to Calvary, weary and faint with bearing His cross, paused to lean against a door, from which he was rudely driven by the master of the house, and that for this act of cruelty the inhuman Jew was doomed thenceforth to be a wanderer upon earth, to outlive the age of man, and continually to rove from land to land, seeking rest and finding none. Like a shadow has that man since wandered over the globe, passing from zone to zone, flitting here and there, seen an instant and then gone. Wherever he stopped to rest a voice behind him cried, "March, march!" Fit emblems of a guilty mind, haunted and pursued by its own avenging memories! Thou sinner shalt hear that terrible voice. Thou who hast driven the Saviour from thy door, or any of those for whom Christ died. Thou shalt hear Him say, *DEPART!* And from that scene of judgment thou shalt go forth a lonely and abandoned creature. Wretched man! whom that day shall make desolate beyond relief. On, over the great desert of eternity shalt thou be driven by the ceaseless cry, *March, march!* And ages to come shall see thee still pursuing thy course of wandering and of woe.—*Rev. Henry M. Field.*

THE REFINEMENT OF AFFLICTION.

"I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."—ISA. xlviii. 19.

THIS one principle universally obtains in respect to the refinement of metals; that the severity of the process requisite to their purification is proportionate to their preciousness. No metal can be brought to a state of purity but by a trial of fire. Those of the least value can be melted and purified by comparatively small degrees of heat. Those of the highest value can be refined but by being placed in the central fires of the glowing

furnace when heated to the greatest intensity. Silver *may* be placed in the furnace, but the heat of the common crucible is all that is requisite for its highest purification. The meaning of the text then is obvious. God says to the sanctified believer, this class being especially here addressed: "I have refined thee, but not with silver. The virtues which I have purposed to develop in you being of all others the most precious, and of all objects of the supremest value in My estimation, I have subjected you to the action of the central fire of the furnace of affliction; the furnace in which the brightest virtues of immortality are developed, purified, and perfected. Because I loved you, and saw in you an adaptation to become possessed of the brightest and the best virtues that adorn My kingdom, I placed you, for your purification and perfection, in those central fires; and because you there became the pure, and true, and beauteous thing I desired, I chose you when you were in that furnace as My own peculiar treasure, and you shall be Mine in that day when I make up My jewels." There are some virtues which bloom up to maturity in circumstances of almost continued prosperity and freedom from the pressure of strong temptation. Others, of a nobler birth, are matured and consolidated under the weight of great trusts and responsibilities. But those which take on the brightest possible forms of beauty and perfection, are those which are refined and purified amid the glowing and melting heat of the furnace of affliction.—*Dr. Asa Mahan.*

PARDON AND PEACE.

"Who is he that condemneth?"—Rom. viii. 34.

A PRISONER, who held a high position in the world, and was a great favourite with the king, was one day brought before the judge, charged with a very great crime. He took his place at the bar with the utmost coolness, and looked at the judge and jury and crowd of spectators as calmly as if he were surrounded by his friends in his own house. The trial began, witnesses were called up, and gave clear evidence that he was guilty, but still he remained as calm and unmoved as ever. The jury came into court and pronounced the verdict of "Guilty." In an instant every eye was turned towards him to observe the effect it had upon him. Just then, he put his hand in his bosom, and laid before the judge a *pardon*, a full, free pardon for all he had done, sealed with the royal signet. This was the secret of his peace, and of his calm demeanour in the time of accusation and trial.

It is thus with the pardoned believer in Jesus Christ. He may be accused and proved guilty before the world; he may in

many things accuse himself; Satan may be his accuser; but with pardon in his bosom, sealed by the grace and Spirit of God, he is calm, peaceful, secure! Who can condemn him to punishment with the Divine forgiveness possessed by him through the blood of the everlasting covenant?

THINGS ABOVE.

"Set your affections on things above," &c.—COL. iii. 2.

THINGS above outlast the days of heaven, and run parallel with the life of God and line of eternity. Things on earth are mutable and momentary, subject to vanity and violence; when we grasp them most greedily, we embrace nothing but smoke, which wrings tears from our eyes, and vanisheth into nothing. Here then the wise man's question takes place, "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? wilt thou rejoice in a thing of nought?" (Prov. xxiii. 5.) Most people are nailed to the earth as Sisera was by Jael; they go *bound downward* as that woman in the Gospel that had a spirit of infirmity, and was bound by Satan; they strive (with the toad) who shall die with most earth in their mouths. The heart of man is an *inverted pyramid*, narrow below, almost sharpened to a point, that it might touch the earth no more than needs must, and broad above, to receive the influence of heaven. But, surely, as we use to say of a top, the keen point of it is towards the earth, but it is flat and dull enough towards heaven; so are most men's affections. These things ought not so to be. Our souls should be like a ship, which is made little and narrow downward, but more wide and broad upwards. *And not on things on earth.* "Set not thine heart on the asses," said Samuel to Saul, "since the desire of all Israel is to thee;" so, set not your affections on outward things, since better things abide you. "It is not for you to be fishing for gudgeons, but for towers, forts, and castles," said Cleopatra to Antony. So neither is it for such as hope for heaven to be taken up with trifles, as Domitian spent his time in catching flies, and Artaxerxes in making hafts for knives. There is a generation of *Terrigenæ fratres* whose names are written in the earth (Jer. xvii. 13), called the inhabitants of the earth (Rev. xii. 12), in opposition to the saints and heirs of heaven. These may, with the *Athenians*, give for their badge the grasshopper, which is bred, liveth, and dieth in the same ground, and though she hath wings, yet flieth not; sometimes she hoppeth upwards a little, but falleth to the ground again. So here. Or at best they are but like the eagle, which soars aloft not for any love of heaven; her eye is all the while upon the prey, which by this means she spies sooner and seizeth upon better.—*Trapp.*

LAUGHTER.

"Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful."—Prov. xiv. 13.

LAUGHTER is no certain sign of happiness. Carlini was the most celebrated buffoon on the Paris stage. A physician was consulted by a patient in the last stage of melancholy. "Go into society," said the physician. "Visit the theatres; see Carlini, and if he does not cure you, your case is indeed desperate." "Alas!" replied the patient, "I am Carlini myself, and while I cause laughter to thousands, I am the most miserable wretch alive."

THE GREAT AND SMALL.

"The small and great are there."—Job iii. 19.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT, seeing Diogenes looking attentively at a large collection of human bones piled one upon another, asked the philosopher what he was looking for. "I am searching," said Diogenes, "for the bones of your father, but I cannot distinguish them from those of his slaves."

THE HOARY HEAD.

"The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness."—Prov. xvi. 31.

STRABO, speaking of the Indians, says, "They pay no peculiar respect to old age, unless it is distinguished by wisdom and discretion." Plutarch compares the hoary head to a crown; it is an honourable distinction, conferred by nature, as the crown is by institution, thus assigning a kingly rank and order to the aged, in proportion to the prudence and wisdom they possess.

THE LAMB OF GOD.

"Behold the Lamb of God."—JOHN i. 29.

1. THE lamb is a very innocent and harmless creature. Jesus Christ is of a sweet, quiet, harmless nature (Heb. vii. 26). 2. The lamb is made a prey of and often worried by dogs, wolves, and other beasts. The Lord Jesus was preyed upon by devils and wicked men. 3. The lamb is a meek and patient creature, bearing wrongs without resistance or revenge. Christ was meek and patient, and loving in spirit and conduct, never revenging Himself upon His enemies. 4. The lamb is silent when brought to slaughter, doth not cry or complain, nor strive as other creatures do. Thus did Jesus meet His death (Isa. liii. 7). 5. The lamb is a contented creature; let the shepherd put it into what pasture he please, it grumbles not, but seems very

well satisfied. Christ was abundantly resigned to the Father's will (Heb. x. 7; John x. 15, 17, 18; Phil. ii. 7, 8). 6. The lamb was appointed under the law for sacrifice to make an atonement, and the blood to be sprinkled, &c. Christ was appointed as a sacrifice for sin to make an atonement, &c., &c. —*B. Keach.*

PREPARING THE WAY.

"Cast ye up, cast ye up; prepare the way."—Isa. lvii. 14.

A CRY generally heard in the East, before the approach of any great prince or conqueror. Dr. Wolf, when lecturing in Philadelphia, 1837, stated that on entering Jerusalem from the west in the direction of Gaza, the road, for a considerable distance from Jerusalem, was so full of stones, that it was impossible to ride, and those who were entering the city were obliged to dismount. When Ibrahim Pacha, son of Mohammed Ali, approached Jerusalem, a considerable number of labourers went before him and removed the stones from the way, amidst a constant cry of "Cast up! cast up the way! Remove the stones!" And on a standard was written, "The Pacha is coming;" and everywhere the cry was heard, "The Pacha is coming! The Pacha is coming! Cast up the way! Remove the stones!" The expression indicates the removal of obstacles and difficulties, preparatory to some important manifestation, or some signal event. See also Isaiah lxii. 10.—*Nicholson.*

DESIRING GOLD.

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."—LUKE xiii. 15.

MIDAS, a Phrygian king, begged of the gods a boon. They granted him whatever he should desire: and the monarch, overjoyed, retained sufficient self-possession to determine that the gift for which he was to ask should be not merely vast, but literally inexhaustible; so he prayed that whatever he touched might immediately become gold. It was granted. He laid his hand upon the rock, and it blazed back upon him a solid mass of priceless value; he clutched his oaken staff, and it dropped from his hand a bar of virgin gold. The covetous heart almost died within him for excess of joy, and he returned to his palace the most exulting of barbaric kings. Alas for the shortsightedness of man! When the king sat at his table, whatever viands he touched instantly became gold—gold, pure and precious, but not the food of man. Hour by hour the conviction forced itself upon the crowned and sceptred wretch that he was indeed doomed to perish—to starve amid all his glittering opulence;

and remembering the ominous saying which he had heard from them of old time—"The gods themselves cannot take back their gifts"—he howled to the sternly-smiling Dionysius to restore him the coarsest and the vilest food, and deliver him from this curse of gold. Thus, it is true, as our Lord has said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Outlines of a Sunday School Address.

GOD MADE ALL THINGS.

MY DEAR CHILDREN, were I to ask you, Who made all things? your reply would be, "God." Then, were I to ask you, How do you know this? you would, I suppose, tell me that you had read it in the Bible, or the preacher had said so, or your parents or teachers had taught you. All this would be quite right. But you know that in "all things" there are a great many things besides the sun, the moon, the stars, the trees, the flowers, and the fishes. There are houses, and ships, and railway engines, and clothes which you wear, &c. Do you think that God made these? "Yes;" "No." Some say yes, others no. Now you are both right, as it happens. God made them first of all as He made the mountains and the trees, in the raw materials, and then He made them through the skill and power of man into what they now are; for man, you know, could do nothing without God. But God did not make them so far as personally using the tools, and putting them together, &c. As the first cause of everything, He made them; but as the agent or instrument whom He employed, man made them.

There was once a little boy, of whom I am going to tell you, who could not see through this. He somehow or other got it into his head that he would be a little infidel, and he wouldn't believe in God as the Creator of all things, and as He to whom he should offer his prayers. Willie, for that is the name I shall call him, was only about five years old. He was fond of attention and of asking questions, as most little boys are. He was naturally a good-tempered boy, easily pleased, and therefore he generally wore a happy look, which made him loved of the family. One evening, just after he had left the room, and bid them all a pleasant "good night," Willie was heard by his aunt Effie to say in an excited tone—

"I sha'n't say my prayers to you—sha'n't say them to-night!"

"What are you saying, Willie?" said his aunt, quietly entering the room. He hung his head; but when his naughtiness was spoken of, the pride of resistance as well as the unsubdued passion of his heart were aroused, and he answered, sullenly—

"I can't see God, and I sha'n't pray to Him."

"Do you only love those you see?" she asked, in a tone of surprise. "Then you only love your father, and mother, and little brother when you can see them; and when you go from home, far away, you will forget grandpa, grandma, and all of us. That's great love, isn't it?"

"Oh, Aunt Effie," said Willie, "I don't mean that; you know I don't; for I have seen you all, and we can come and see one another. But I never saw God."

"Suppose, Willie, you had never seen me, and to-morrow morning your mother should show you a beautiful book and say, 'Aunt Effie sent this to you;' and in the afternoon there should come a dear, kind little girl, who should say, 'Willie, your Aunt Effie sent me to play with you, and she sent these bright flowers, so that we can play Fairy Queen;'—would you not think at once, 'How good and kind Aunt Effie is!' and would you not love her?"

"Oh, yes, Aunt Effie: it would be so plain, I should know you were good."

"But God does a great deal more than I have said. He does send beautiful flowers, so that you can find them everywhere; He has sent you so many good, kind friends to love you and take care of you, that I should grow tired to name them all. Besides, He takes care of you in the darkness all the night."

"Oh, no, Aunt Effie; mother takes care of me, because when I cry she comes to me in a minute."

"Yes; but who takes care of your mother?"

"Grandma."

"And who takes care of her?"

"Grandpa."

"And who takes care of him?"

"He can take care of himself! Why, Aunt Effie!—a great, big man! he knows just what to do."

"Oh, yes, Willie—very easy it seems when all is still and quiet; but what if God should send the quick lightning to burn the house in the night, or if a fierce robber should come, or if he should grow very sick? what then? Could your grandpa hold the lightning back in the clouds, or while sleeping keep the robber from the door? You see, Willie, that if God, who made

us, who made everything, did not take care of us, nobody could."

"Well, Aunt Effie," urged the child, with an expression of intense interest, "I see God takes care of us; but you said He made everything, and I don't believe that. You said yesterday we had no right to say what we can't prove; and you can't prove God made this bedstead!"

"Who did make it?"

"Why, a man, to be sure!"

"What did he make it of?"

"Of wood; can't you see?"

"Yes; but where did the wood come from?"

"It came out of trees."

"That is right. Now tell me who made the trees grow, who made the man, and who gave him sense enough to make the bedstead, and I will tell you who made it."

"Aunt Effie, grandpa makes trees grow!"

"No, Willie; grandpa puts the little trees in the ground, and waters them: he wants them all to live; but some die. Those trees which you helped him to plant to-day only took the place of trees he put there last year, but which did not live. If he could make them grow, would he have done the work twice in the same place?"

"Aunt Effie, I know something now! God didn't make grandpa's axe! You can't say anything to that. You can't make me say He did."

"Willie, what is the axe made of?"

"Of iron and wood. I know about the wood; but the iron, Aunt Effie, I think, it isn't made at all!"

"Well, where does iron come from?" I ask.

"I can't tell, Aunt Effie; but it didn't grow, and man didn't make it."

"No, Willie; it is in the ground. God put it there, and man finds it, all mixed with the sand. He first digs it out of the earth, and puts it in a very hot fire, where it is melted and runs altogether in a large lump. Then he hammers it to make it solid; and after all this work it is ready to be melted, to be made into different things for us to use. Do you think now that God had nothing to do with grandpa's axe? He made all things; and, though you should try all night, you cannot think of anything He did not make."

"Oh, Aunt Effie, just let me get in your arms while we talk about the blanket. Can you make me say He made that?"

"Oh, yes, easily enough. The blanket is made of wool. God makes wool grow on the sheep, and gives man knowledge to make it into blankets."

"And did He make moonshine, and flowers, and rain, and sunshine, and every little thing?"

"Yes, Willie. And will you go to sleep without thanking Him for His goodness, and asking Him to take care of you, and make you good, and keep us all safe, well, and happy?"

"Well, Aunt Effie, I will say my prayers; but I wish you would talk so to me every night when I'm not bad."

In this way Aunt Effie cured little Willie of his temper against God, and showed him how God made all things. Now, my children, I hope you will remember your Creator as the Creator of all things, and that you will never neglect to pray unto Him with your hearts, through our Lord Jesus Christ.



Books.

Aids to Daily Meditation. London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 2, Castle-street, City-road.—The getting up of this volume, so far as type, paper, and binding go, is admirable. The contents consist of "practical reflections and observations on a passage of Scripture for each day in the year." It bears no name as its author or editor; but is the product of many minds. It is calculated to promote a thoughtful, enduring, and growing piety in its readers. This is the need of the times, and any book that will assist in realising this is deserving of Christian patronage and circulation.

—*Introductory Lectures on Theology.* By JOHN HANNAH, D.D. With a Memoir by Rev. W. B. POPE.—This is a beautiful and elegant volume just published by the Wesleyan Conference Office. It has for some time been expected by all who knew and admired its author. We are glad to give it a welcome, and very heartily commend it to our readers. The lectures are sixty-four in number, embracing the whole range of theology. They are only skeletons of lectures, but such as can readily be clothed with flesh. They are clear, concise, simple, and evangelical. As a fair specimen,

we insert one in this number of the LAY PREACHER. We hope, occasionally, to print others, for the benefit of such as cannot afford to buy the volume. Meanwhile, those who can afford six shillings cannot do better than purchase the book at once. Mr. Pope has produced a memoir every way worthy himself and the noble subject of it.—*Talks about Animals*, by UNCLE ROBERT, is a capital book for boys, published by the Book Society, 28, Paternoster-row, and gives a fund of information in a very interesting way.—*The Duties of Wesleyan Stewards*, by Rev. E. WORKMAN, is a pamphlet which is very useful in showing stewards what they have each respectively to do. It may be had from the Wesleyan Conference Office.—*The Devil's Masterpiece* is a tract of which we have nothing to say. It is published by H. Blackman, 1, Bull and Mouth-street, London.—*The Heavenly Pilot*. By Rev. T. LOWE, and sold by A. Osborne, 29, Farringdon-street, London, is a very useful little book.—*The Methodist Pulpit* is issued monthly by Mr. Osborne, and consists of a Sermon by some Methodist Minister.



THE LAY PREACHER.

The Preaching Needed.

WHAT kind of preaching is needed in order to reach the consciences of sinners and to break their stubborn wills? So far as we have been able to learn, we have become convinced that but little good is to be expected from the best sermons, unless he who preaches is deeply in earnest. It is when our whole souls are glowing with heavenly truth, our whole hearts burning with love to God, and bursting with desire for the present salvation of souls, for whom the Lord of glory bled and died; it is when the one cry of the burdened soul to God, as the knee is bent in the closet, and as we rise to preach the everlasting Gospel, is, "Give me souls, O Lord, or I die!"—when we cannot endure that a single soul who hears us should perish, and we pour forth the fresh and ardent yearning of our hearts in words that breathe with present life, and thoughts that burn as coals from a living altar—it is when thus we preach that our hearers are not only convinced that God is in us of a truth, but are brought to feel that they cannot live without His light and love. Then it is that the sword of the Spirit reaches the heart, and the sinner cries out in the anguish

of death, "Carry me out of the host, for I am slain." Then it is the dead awake, arise, and sing the praises of redeeming love.

Such is the preaching that is needed. Such we must have, or we can never affect the mass of wickedness without—never accomplish the great work that is given us to do. But in order thus to preach we must dwell on Golgotha—we must watch with Christ in Gethsemane. We must live where we can see on the one hand the flames of the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, and hear on the other the songs that burst from the unnumbered millions around the great white throne. We must live on the very confines of eternity, in close communion with the spirit-world, and with the Father of spirits Himself. We must have such fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, as shall constrain the world to take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus, and learned of Him.

REV. E. F. HATFIELD.

Hints to Bible Students.

BY REV. J. HAMILTON, D.D.

(Concluded from page 130.)

5. **I**N family worship it is usually best to read some book or the entire Bible right through, chapter by chapter; but in his private study, every reader must adopt the plan which suits his turn of mind and his circumstances. A man of leisure may allot a large portion for his daily perusal, and in his progress from book to book he may avail himself of the commentator or critic who has done the most to expound it. And a man of little leisure, like the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, may be glad to snatch for his morning meal a promise or a proverb—the verse of a Psalm, or a sentence from a Gospel. But even the busiest man will find occasional opportunities for more extensive read-

ing; and on some quiet evening, or in the seclusion of the Sabbath, you could not do better than sit down to the Bible, as you would to a theological treatise or a volume of Christian biography, with your mind made up to a deliberate and straightforward perusal. With this view you may select the history of Joseph or Samson, of David or Solomon; the Journeys of the Israelites; the Missionary Excursions of St. Paul: or you may resolve to master a century of Hebrew History, connecting with the recorded events the contemporary prophecies: or you may determine to read right through a Gospel narrative, or the whole writings of some apostle, James, John, or Peter. And just as you find the charms of continuity and completeness enhance all the other attractions of an ordinary book, so, in perfect harmony with devout and reverential feelings, will the course of the narrative, the development of the leading idea, the progress of the argument, enlist your interest and quicken your perceptive powers. Indeed, there are many of the inspired writings with which it is hardly fair to deal otherwise. To take the analogous case—when you have only a minute to spare, you may run your eye over a Hymn of Cowper, or a “Thought” of Pascal, and at once glean something memorable; but you would hardly think it justice to a Sermon of Horsley, or a Biography of Walton, or a Drama of Racine, to read it at the rate of two pages a-day; yet this is the treatment usually given to the kindred compositions contained in the Sacred Volume. No doubt, to keep pace with readers who “run,” it has “words upon wheels;” and a Psalm, or a single apostolic exhortation, may supply to the man most hard-pressed and hurried, material for the day’s meditation; and we cannot be sufficiently thankful for such terse and portable sayings. But connected prophecies and lengthened narratives lose much of their impressiveness when split into isolated sections; and, to say nothing of the everyday error which quotes the reasonings of Bildad and Zophar as if they were no less authoritative than the Divine Arbiter’s own deliverance—dissevered from that final deliverance, a drama, like Job, loses half its significance and all its unity. Read in this fragmentary fashion, the Epistle to the Hebrews has failed to disclose to many a Protestant the true theory of Christian Sacerdotalism, and the Epistle to the Romans is obscure on the method of justification. And, forbearing reference to the most sacred of all Biographies, were the reader trying the experiment on himself, he might possibly find that the itinerancies of Paul the Apostle have not left on his mind an impression so lucid as the career of Whitefield or Eliot, and that his outline of Hebrew History is a sad contrast to his knowledge of his own country’s annals. And yet he has read the sacred

records ten times as often as any uninspired historian. But—which sufficiently accounts for the difference—the modern author was eagerly resumed night after night, till the perusal was ended: Samuel and Luke were meted out in daily tasks, and never read except in small disjointed fragments.

6. Like other books, the charm of the Bible will very much depend on the frame of mind in which it is studied. To an earnest reader it will always be interesting; to a docile reader it will always be new and surprising. If you intended to visit the land of Gold, you would peruse with avidity the publication which described the country, and which told you what equipments to provide. Or if you were fond of some science, you might spend half the night devouring a treatise which expounded its principles, and you would feel richly rewarded in your fresh information or your new intellectual mastery. So was it with John Colby. As soon as he learned to desire a better country, "God gave him a heart for the blessed Testament;" and nearly all the waking hours of his remaining three years were devoted to its study. If we, too, want "a religion good and strong, that will keep by us and help us when we come to die," if conformity to God's will be the science on which we are most intent, we shall need no inducement more powerful to draw us back to these Scriptures ever and anon. To an honest heart they never lack the zest of novelty; nor so long as the mind is wakeful will there ever be an end of their wonders. When the Jews returned from Babylon, and were somewhat settled in their ancient city, the occasion was signalled by a great Scripture-reading. Assembling early and commencing with prayer, the governor and the ministers occupying a platform in the midst, whilst a vast congregation thronged the square, one voice relieved another, till the sobs and bitter cries of the audience interrupted the speakers. The tale of God's mercies, the recital of His good commandments, and the whole history of their nation's provocations and perversity, had broken the heart of the people; and though the rulers succeeded in stilling their lamentations, no time was lost in carrying out one practical conclusion. "They found written in the law that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month. So the people went forth and brought olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of shady trees, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the House of God, and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness." The perusal of the law had pointed out a neglected duty; the heart

of the people was soft; it was the very season when the feast should be kept; no time was lost; but as the people prepared themselves hastily to keep the commandment, so Jehovah blessed with his immediate smile—"a great gladness"—the nation's new obedience. An enchanted scene it was in that clear autumn weather—every street arched over with its verdant trellis, and every flat roof a fragrant bower—Jerusalem suddenly converted into a forest, and its new temple a mount waving with shrubbery and blazing with flowers; whilst, sweeter than the breath of the myrtle, rose the incense of praise and the swell of a sanctified patriotism. It was a week of waking blessedness—as if a segment of the heavenly Sabbath had been inserted in the days of earth, and people wondered at their happiness. Yet, after all, they were only carrying out a command which had for ages existed in the Word of God, with the existence of which some of them were doubtless acquainted long ago, but which, had it not been for the propitious mood of that moment, might have remained a dead letter till Jerusalem was a second time destroyed. And even so, there may be both doctrines and duties still latent in Scripture, whose discovery only awaits our more docile perusal. And, like the Jews at the revival of the Feast of Tabernacles, when we comply with the neglected command, or credit the faithful saying, we shall experience "a great gladness"—the joy which has already rewarded more teachable scholars, and which, with more candour, would sooner have greeted ourselves.

Finally, prayer is a sure means of rendering the Word read both pleasant and profitable. There is a certain congeniality of mind essential to the enjoyment and right understanding of any book. A man of scientific exactitude will soon weary of a work of fancy, and a poet will soon lay aside a work of tame technicalities. And, looking to their external style, there are few minds so universal as to appreciate equally every sacred composition, historical, poetical, argumentative, didactic; and there has been much wresting of Scripture from forgetting this obvious distinction. Frigid critics have applied their micrometers to the imagery of Isaiah, and have subjected to logical severity the metaphors of Job; just as some over-heated fancies have seen no end of mysteries in the books of Esther and Ezra. Happy is it for a Bible-book when it finds a like-minded interpreter—when a poet like Horne expatiates on the Psalms, and when a logician like Haldane expounds the Romans. But, apart from this outward form—this human style—historical, didactic, logical, poetic—there is an inner, all-pervading style—so to speak, God's own style—a style of thought which is neither Hebrew nor Hellenistic—nay, nor even human, but aloof from all, and

above them all—a heavenly style—a tone of sanctity, and benevolence, and majesty which makes this book as superhuman as it is all-adapted and all-blessing. To appreciate this—to enter into this the Divine mode of thinking and feeling—it does not need that we become poets, reasoners, and sages; it does need, however, that we become worshippers. No man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him; even so, no one knoweth the things of God save the Spirit of God; and to give us sympathy with God's own mind, to enable us to credit such love as is the love of God, and to give us relish for such holiness as is the very essence of the Godhead, as well as to make us cheerfully bow to the authority of the Great Speaker, we need to be taught by the Holy Spirit. That Spirit is promised to prayer. God will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. And if, like John Colby, we cry to the Almighty, He will give us a heart for the blessed Testament. If, like Ezra and his audience, our reading of the Law is prefaced by prayer, it will be followed by repentance and reform. If, like David, we exclaim, "Open Thou mine eyes," we shall see wonders in God's Word. If, with Paul, we bow the knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He will strengthen us by His Spirit in the inner man, and Christ believed will dwell in our hearts, and we shall be enabled, through the faith of love, to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

The Biblical Expositor.

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."—Rom. viii. 33, 34.

WHO shall lay anything to the charge of (or "bring any charge against") *God's elect?*—the first place in this Epistle where believers are styled "the elect." In what sense this is meant will appear in next chapter. [*It is*] *God that justifieth.*—A number of expositors (after Augustin) read this as a question: "God that justifieth?" (Will *He* bring a charge against His own elect?) So in next verse, "Who is he that condemneth? Christ that died?" (Will *He* condemn them?) But beside that this "creates quite an unnatural accumulation of questions" [THORLUCK], it is "intolerable" and "contrary to all Scripture analogy"—after the apostle has spoken of God's being so far as that none can be against us, and His giving such a gift as secures

every other, and when on the ground of this he challenges *any* to criminate God's elect—to suppose that he would turn round and ask if "God that justified" would at the same time criminate them, or "Christ that died" for them would at the same time "condemn" them. Plainly, it is to *creatures* only that he throws down the challenge, asking which of *them* would dare to bring a charge against those whom God has justified—would condemn those for whom Christ died—*yea, rather, that is risen again*—to make good the purposes of His death. Here, as in some other cases, the apostle delightfully corrects himself (see Gal. iv. 9; and on i. 12); not meaning that the resurrection of Christ was of more saving value than His death, but that "having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"—which though precious to us was to Him of unmingled bitterness—it was incomparably more delightful to think that He was again *alive*, and living to see to the efficacy of His death in our behalf.

Who is even ("also") *at the right hand of God*.—The right hand of the king was anciently the seat of honour (comp. 1 Sam. xx. 25; 1 Kings ii. 19; Ps. xlv. 9), and denoted participation in the royal power and glory (Matt. xx. 21). The classical writings contain similar allusions. Accordingly, Christ's sitting at the right hand of God—predicted in Ps. cx. 1, and historically referred to in Mark xvi. 19; Acts ii. 33; vii. 56; Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1; 1 Pet. iii. 22; Rev. iii. 21—signifies the *glory* of the exalted Son of Man, and the *power* in the government of the world in which He participates. Hence it is called "sitting on the right hand of *Power*" (Matt. xxvi. 64), and "sitting on the right hand of the *Majesty* on high" (Heb. i. 3). *Who also maketh intercession for us*—using all His boundless *interest* with God in our behalf. "His *Session* at God's right hand denotes His *power* to save us; His *Intercession*, His *will* to do it" [BENGE]. But how are we to conceive of this intercession? Not as of one pleading "on bended knees and with outstretched arms," to use the expressive language of Calvin. But yet, neither is it merely a figurative intimation that the power of Christ's redemption is continually operative, or merely to show the fervour and vehemence of His love for us. It cannot be taken to mean less than this, that the glorified Redeemer, conscious of His claims, expressly *signifies His will* that the efficacy of His death should be made good to the uttermost, and signifies it in some such royal style as we find Him employing in that wonderful intercessory prayer which He spoke *as from within the veil* (see John xvii. 11, 12): "Father, I *will* that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am" (see John xvii. 24). But *in what form* this will is expressed is as undiscoverable as it is unimportant.—Dr. D. Brown.

The Sinner Detected, and his Punishment Denounced.

A SERMON BY THE LATE REV. DAVID STONER.

[THE following sermon, with another (hitherto unpublished) which we hope to print in a subsequent number of the *Lay Preacher*, have recently come into our possession. We have great pleasure in placing them before our readers. The name of *David Stoner* as a preacher of tremendous power, and as a man of uncommon holiness, is known far and wide in the religious world. This sermon shows how a pure mind and a loving heart can deal with the "terrors of the law." Under the preaching of it many were the "slain of the Lord." Do not the times require more preaching of this kind? If the alarms of Sinai were more solemnly denounced, would not the glad tidings of the Gospel be more readily believed? This sermon is copyright.—Ed.]

"Behold, ye have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out."—NUMBERS xxxii. 23.

THESE solemn words were delivered on a very interesting occasion. They were originally spoken by Moses to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. The Israelites were now near the river Jordan; they had journeyed from the wilderness, and were on the borders of Canaan. They had discomfited the Midianites and Moabites, had taken the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, and had taken possession of their cities, villages, and lands. When these two tribes and a-half, who had a very great multitude of cattle, saw that the land in which they were was a good place for cattle, they came to Moses, as recorded in this chapter, and requested him to give them their promised inheritance on that side Jordan, when Moses expostulated with them and reproved them. He endeavoured to show them it was unreasonable that their other brethren should have to fight for their inheritance, while they remained idle and at ease. "Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?" (Verse 6). But they explained themselves, and proposed the conditions on which they wished their request to be granted—viz., They would repair their cities for their wives and children, and folds for their cattle, but they themselves, to the number of about 40,000, would go armed with their brethren over Jordan, and assist them to fight against their enemies, and to take possession of their inheritance, after which they would return to their own lot. With these conditions Moses was satisfied, and granted their request. "But if ye will not do so"—if you prove unfaithful to the engagement that you now solemnly enter into

before God—"behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out." Ye have sinned, not only against your brethren, whom it is your duty to assist in this affair, but against the Lord; and though your brethren may not punish you, yet do not imagine that you will escape unpunished. "Be sure your sin will find you out." (Verses 20-23.) These words we shall accommodate to our own circumstances and benefit, and in so doing endeavour to detect the sinner, and to denounce his punishment.

I. TO DETECT THE SINNER. "Behold, ye," &c. But here, perhaps, it will be necessary to exhort you to be honest to yourselves, and to examine your own hearts. Remember, this is a matter of infinite importance, for without a heartfelt conviction that you are sinners in the sight of God, there can be no hope of salvation. And the more earnestly ought we to exhort you to look into your own hearts and lives, because so many err in this particular. How hard is it to fasten the personal conviction upon them that they are sinners, and deserve the flames of hell; and more especially if they are moral and upright in their outward conduct. They will readily join in the great congregation, and say in general terms, "We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us. God be merciful to us, miserable sinners." But if you wish to fasten those general confessions upon them in particular, you will find no little difficulty. They have some general notions of God's mercy, of Christ's atonement, and of man's sinfulness; but they have no distinct ideas of sin, they have no clear knowledge of their own state, or of the plan of salvation. And what is more surprising, this is the condition of too many who attend the ministration of the Word. Hence it is imperiously necessary to detect the sinner, to paint his character, to show him his transgressions, notwithstanding all his evasions and excuses. "Behold, ye have sinned," &c.

To detect the sinner we must inquire—

1. *What is sin?* Sin is the voluntary transgression of a known law. And from this definition it follows, if you have knowingly and willingly transgressed the law which God has given you in His Word, you have sinned against the Lord. The law of God is contained in these two commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c., and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." You have this law on a larger scale in the Ten Commandments, as they are explained by Christ in His Sermon on the Mount, and in all the precepts of the Gospel. To convince you that you have transgressed this law, consider—

(1.) *That all men are sinners by nature.* Adam, our first parent, sinned, and lost the image of God, and in consequence he entailed his own sinful image and nature upon all his posterity. Adam has not transmitted the guilt of his personal sin to his offspring. This has been removed by the atonement and mediation of Christ. In this sense are we to understand the words of the apostle, "As by the offence of one man (Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation"—in him were all condemned to die on account of his sin—"even so by the righteousness of one (Christ) the free gift came upon all men to justification of life;" so that by the atonement of Christ were all justified from the guilt of Adam's sin. On this ground it is that all who die in infancy are accepted and saved. On the same ground we have authority to affirm that no man will be damned on account of Adam's sin, but for *his own* transgression. But though Adam has not entailed his personal guilt upon us, he has transmitted to us his sinful image and nature, so that by nature we are children of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins. God looked down from heaven upon men to see if there were any that did seek after God; "but," saith He, "there is none that doeth righteousness—no, not one." We all may join with the Psalmist, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." This evil nature we bring with us into the world, and as soon as ever reason dawns, so soon does it show itself in every child of man. This evil nature, these bad tempers and dispositions, are called "the old man," "the old Adam," "the carnal mind." This "carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;" so that if your nature has not undergone a complete change, you are sinners, you must be sinners, you cannot be anything else but sinners. The law requires love; but this carnal mind is enmity, the opposite of love. The law requires subjection, but this carnal mind is not subject, and it cannot be subject. You may as soon make flames burn downwards, or rivers run up hill, or stones fall up into the air, as make the carnal mind subject to the law of God. You may as soon make fishes swim on the land, and land animals live in the water; you may as soon make the ox fly through the air, or the lion graze on the meadow, as make the carnal mind love God. It is an impossibility, it is a contradiction, it is absurd to attempt it. And as all men have this evil nature, if you have not experienced a divine and complete change called in the Bible "being born again," you are a sinner, you must be a sinner, you cannot be other than a sinner. So that if we never saw you commit an outward sin in your whole life, if you never yet experienced this supernatural change, we must still say on the authority of this Bible, "Behold, ye have sinned against the Lord."

(2.) *That you are sinners by practice.* Some there are who are open and profligate transgressors of God's law, such as drunkards, swearers, liars, Sabbath-breakers, adulterers, and dishonest persons. These characters need not much detection, they are open and avowed sinners; many of them, when charged with their crimes, will plead guilty before God. But there are others who, as we have already hinted, it is not so easy to detect, and persuade them to believe that they are sinners against God. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" "without faith it is impossible to please God;" and therefore, if you do not possess living faith in Christ, none of your actions, words, or thoughts can be acceptable to God. And the language of the Church of England is, "Works done before justification are not pleasing to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Christ; yea, rather, as they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not they have the nature of sin." But perhaps you say you have faith in God; you believe that Christ was the Son of God, that He came to save sinners; and you believe He died for you. But this is not sufficient; this is merely a notional, an historical, speculative faith; this is only the faith of the head, if the expression be allowed. Have you the faith of the heart? That is, to use the words of the Church again, a "sure trust and confidence that a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven and he is reconciled to the favour of God." But you, so far from knowing that your sins are forgiven, are rather ready to deny that you have any to forgive. But, remember, if you have not this faith, every action, word, and thought of your life partakes of the nature of sin. But if you still refuse conviction, bring your life to the law of God, and weigh yourselves in the balances of the sanctuary. Have you always loved God with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength? Or take the four first precepts of the Decalogue, and try yourselves by them. You will readily acquit yourself of the first two. You will tell us you are not a heathen, you have never bowed down to stocks and stones, and therefore you have never broken the two first commandments. But this is not all. God has said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." Whatsoever you love most, that is your god. Some make riches their god, some honour, others some creature, some their belly. Have you not loved yourself more than God? Have you not loved the world more than God? And to try your love, take this plain proof. A man thinks and speaks most about that which he loves most. Do you not think, then, much more about the world than about God? Do you not love to talk more about the world than about God? If this is the case, the world is

your god? You have transgressed the first commandment; you have been sinners every day of your life.

And with reference to the third commandment you will also plead guiltless. You have never taken God's name in vain. What, have you never mentioned the dreadful name of God, without thinking upon His perfections? Have you never used His name in sentences when there was no need of it? Have you always, like a great man, taken off your hat when you pronounced the name of God? Or if you have not used this formality, have you felt the same reverence and humility of heart? Have you not often, in moments of surprise, interlarded your conversations with exclamations, "Lord, bless me!" "Lord, help me!" "Lord, have mercy upon me?" If you have, you have broken this precept, and you are a sinner before God.

The fourth commandment also you have broken: "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." Have you always kept it holy? Has it always been set apart for God? What, have you never thought about the world, nor spoken about the world, nor done anything in reference to the world, nor employed others on the Sabbath-day, except in cases of real necessity? Have you not spoken your own words, harboured your own thoughts, done your own actions, neglected religious ordinances, idled away your time, joined in frothy conversation, read unprofitable books, taken unnecessary journeys, paid unnecessary visits? If you have, you have broken this command, and you are a sinner against God. Or to sum up these four precepts in one, have you loved the Lord your God "with all your heart, and mind, and soul, and strength?" Have you always, in all your actions, had an eye to His glory? Have you never sought your own ease, honour, or pleasure in preference to the honour of God? Have you, at every moment, in every day, had a reference to God? Have you served Him with all your strength? You know, you feel you have not; therefore you are sinners against God.

We now come to the other Table, which respects your fellow-men: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The first refers to your parents: "Honour thy father and thy mother." Have you always obeyed these commands, except when they were plainly contrary to the Word of God, not only when you were children, but ever since? for your obligation and obedience never ceases so long as your parents live. Have you always paid a degree of respect and reverence to their persons, and due deference to their judgment? If it has been necessary, have you administered to their wants? Have you borne with their infirmities, and endeavoured by every possible means to smooth the rugged path of old age down to the silent grave? If you have

not, you have sinned against the Lord. But the commandment refers not only to your natural, but your political parents in the civil government. Have you rendered tribute to whom tribute is due, honour to whom honour? Have you given to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's? Have you not only feared God, but honoured the king, with all the governors whom he employs? If you have not, you have sinned against the Lord.

To the next (the sixth) precept you will all plead guiltless: "Thou shalt not kill." You will readily tell us you have murdered nobody. But read what Christ says in Matt. v. 21, 22. "Raca" signifies vain fellow, shallow brains, blockhead. Have you no enemies? Do you not feel malice, hatred, and enmity in your heart? If this is the case, you have sinned against the Lord.

The seventh commandment is like unto it, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Suffice it to read the comment of Christ, and you will find yourselves guilty.

"Thou shalt not steal." Have you never defrauded your fellow-men? Have you never taken advantage of their ignorance, or inattention, or weakness to go beyond them, to overreach them? If so, you have sinned.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." It may be true that you have never in a public court borne false evidence; but do you remember the other precept illustrating this: "Speak evil of no man." Have you always, of the dead or absent, spoken nothing but good, except in cases of pressing necessity? Have you never slandered, spoken evil, indulged a spirit of backbiting and tale-bearing? If so, you have sinned against the Lord.

But the tenth commandment is as a fence and guard to all the rest, and proves that wicked thoughts and desires are sinful as well as words and actions. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's property." This may never appear in your actions or in your words; but if there is envy in your heart at the thought of your neighbour's prosperity, you have sinned against the Lord.

But to sum up all these in one. Have you loved all men as you have loved yourselves? Do you do to other men as you would wish them to do unto you on a change of circumstances? If not, you have sinned against the Lord. Tell us honestly, What do you think now of your state? Have you felt us searching your conscience? Are you convinced that you are a sinner—that you have sinned in deed, in word, in thought? Have we stopped up every crevice? Have you no loop-hole to creep out at? Will you now acknowledge that you have sinned? If this is the case, having detected the sinner, we proceed—

II. To DENOUNCE HIS PUNISHMENT. "Be sure your sin will

find you out." That is, it will not pass unnoticed, unregarded, unpunished. As your sins are a violation of God's law, so they will bring upon you the penalty of God's law; and though they may appear trifling and inconsiderable to you, yet they will find you out in a certain punishment. We will notice the nature and certainty of this punishment.

1. The nature of this punishment—"Your sins will find you out."

(1.) *In the present uneasiness and misery of mind that accompany a life of sin.* God has wisely and graciously connected sin and unhappiness together, that men might be deterred from crimes, and that being convinced that peace is not to be found in earthly good, they might seek it in its proper source. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. But the wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." There are various things connected with a life of sin that all tend to produce an uneasy restlessness of mind. God has a vicegerent, a servant in every sinner's conscience. Here the sinner's actions are recorded. On the pages of this awful volume within his transgressions are written in black characters, and Conscience is ready to seize every opportunity to read him an awful chapter. In every silent hour of the day, and in every waking hour of the night, Conscience is ready to sound in his ears the horrors of his condition. In addition to this, there are many turbulent and unholy passions which all thirst for dominion and enjoyment. These one properly calls "the dogs of hell;" and so they will be one grand instrument of punishment in hell, as they are one grand cause of the sinner's misery here. The best emblem of his mind is that used by the prophet—the raging sea, when it is tossed by conflicting winds and roaring tempests. So the poor sinner is driven to and fro by conflicting passions. At one hour you see him light and trifling as a butterfly; the next you see him kicked up into a tempest of ungovernable fury and anger. One moment he is stupid as an ass, the next sullen as a swine, and the next melancholy as one in despair. Now, it is evident, whilst governed by his passions, he knows nothing of happiness.

Anxious cares are another fearful source of restlessness. But, above all, that fearful looking for the just and fiery indignation at the end of his mortal course. It is true that sinners avoid looking forward as much as possible; but sometimes, in spite of themselves, they have a glimpse of a gaping grave, an expecting devil, and a yawning hell; and how does the sight appal them! "Oh, that Death!" said a gentleman of large possessions, of good health, and cheerful natural temper; "I do not love to think on it. It comes in and spoils all." So that from

these united sources of mind, the sinner is kept in a state of perturbation and restlessness. He turns every way to find rest, and finds none. He runs from one broken cistern to another, but can find no water to refresh his parched soul. This it was that caused Adam and Eve to hide themselves foolishly among the trees of the garden. This it was that made Cain a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth. He had a guilty conscience, and the voice of a brother's blood was for ever sounding in his ears. In the brethren of Joseph, conscience would not fall asleep all those years between selling him and meeting him again. But as soon as they were brought into trouble, then they began to accuse themselves and say, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants. We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." What misery of mind did Saul bring upon himself, so that he went to seek communications from the devil! What pangs and throes of conscience had David to endure! What misery of mind had Judas! Such an evil is a guilty conscience, that, rather than endure it, he leaped at once into hell. And methinks if you had seen him, even when he had received the thirty pieces of silver, you might have seen misery depicted in his face, and a dark devil looking out of his eye. A guilty conscience has disclosed sins that had been hidden for many years. A guilty conscience is an antepast of endless misery. In this respect your sins have often found you out. In the day of affliction, and when the thunders have rolled and the lightnings have blazed under the preaching of the Word, often has Conscience presented all your sins before you. Nay, all the scenes of amusement pursued by sinners are proofs of the power of a guilty conscience. Would any persons having half a grain of common sense spend hours in shuffling pieces of painted paper, or in skipping and wriggling round a room at the sound of scraped catgut, or in swallowing down whole casks of intoxicating poison, if it were not for this that it serves to pass away time, to drown the cries of a guilty conscience? All these amusements and diversions are a proof of the uneasy restlessness and misery which accompany a life of sin. So that in this sense, "be sure your sin will find you out."

Many sins will find you out—

(2.) *In those temporal calamities which they bring in their train.* We not merely refer to those sins which usually bring men to the gallows, but those sins which bring poverty, disease, wretchedness, and the marked judgments of Heaven upon their votaries. Sin has found out many who once were in affluent circumstances, by bringing them down to poverty and indigence.

Sin has found out many who once enjoyed health, by bringing sickness upon them. Sin has found out many who once enjoyed life, by cutting short their span of existence, and bringing them down to an untimely grave. Sin has found out many who once were children of many mercies, by making them the objects of some remarkable judgments from heaven. They had filled up the measure of their iniquities, and God blasted them with the breath of His hot displeasure. It is true this is not always the case, this is not always the plan of God's government. Then to human appearances he may act in direct opposition to that. The wicked may flourish as the green bay-tree, their eyes may stand out with fatness, they may have more than heart could wish; and the righteous may be deprived even of the comforts of life. So it is far from their sins finding them out in any temporal calamity; their prosperity seems to increase in the same proportion as their wickedness. Sometimes this is the case; then we should consider that this is not the land of retribution. God cannot give any adequate punishment to sin in this state of existence. And in most cases He is in silent, awful justice reserving all; the punishment of those sinners for the proper place of punishment. But though this is the method of God's dispensations on some occasions, yet on others you see that sins find out their slaves in temporal calamities in this life. Of this Job gives us a dreadful description (Job xxvii. 13-23). But these, perhaps, were more usual under the Old Testament dispensation than under the New. In this respect how dreadfully did the sins of the antediluvians find them out! "Every imagination of the thoughts of men's hearts were evil, and that continually." He warned them by His servant Noah, a preacher of righteousness, whilst the ark was being builded; but, at length, when they manifested a determined resolution of persisting in their wicked courses, He said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," and He gave them up to the hardness of their hearts; when, lo, the deluge burst suddenly upon them, and dashed them and their possessions into one promiscuous watery grave. The punishment of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah also confirms this observation; a torrent of fire and brimstone descended upon them: an emblem of hell was rained from heaven to punish their impiety. But if you escape these temporal calamities, "be sure your sins will find you out"—

(3.) *In the approach of the king of terrors.* While health and wealth endure, you can contrive to forget your sins, and to hush the disturbing emotions of a guilty conscience; you can silence your foreboding fear, and draw a thick veil between you and eternity; and having thus procured a calm, you can sit com-

fortably at ease. But, alas! your hope will perish. This calm is deceitful, and is only a prelude to the blacker storm and to the more furious tempest. When you approach the mortal valley, strewed thick with dead men's bones, and with epithets and skulls, then, oh! then—

“The heightened fear of death you find,
The tyrant brandishing his sting
Appears, and hell is close behind.”

When you come to pass through the valley, then your sins will find you out. The dense clouds will thicken over your guilty head, and involve you in a darkness that may be felt. When death begins to take out the pins of your earthly tabernacle, and it totters and nods, threatening a speedy fall, then conscience, that appeared to be stupefied, will begin to awake. When death begins to shatter the cogs and springs and wheels of your frail machine, then your memory, that you hoped contained not the smallest vestige of your past sins, will undeceive you, and call up all your crimes in regular array before your astonished sight. When the man-eating monster seizes you between his devouring jaws to press out your guilty soul, and to grind your body to atoms, then “your sins will find you out.” When fell disease shall shoot its burning arrows across your bowels, then sin will poison every shaft. When Death's brawny arm shall throw you on a bed of sickness, sin will plant it with thorns. When the mortal enemy shall present you with the fatal cup to drink, sin will mingle it with vinegar and gall. When he shall make his final attack upon you, then how will your sins marshal themselves in battle array before you! He will first attack the outworks, and having made a lodgment there in your members, he will torture you to strong pain, and finally he will make a dreadful onset in the heart, the seat of life; and having forced his way through every obstruction, and compelled the unwilling, guilty soul to quit its tenement of clay, the mortal, shattered tabernacle must be his victim until the resurrection-morn. In these awful circumstances “your sins will find you out.” Without one ray of hope, or beam of light; without comfort or consolation, whither will you turn? whither will you flee? Whatever way you look, scenes of horror present themselves. Upwards, a threatening Jehovah, an angry God, a heaven that you have lost for ever, the Judge of all the earth ready with His red-hot thunderbolts to drive you to irretrievable ruin. Downwards, Tophet gaping wide to receive you, and the curling flames of hell to be your bed of torture for ever. Onwards, an eternity, an awful eternity, a never-ending eternity of misery. Backwards, a life of sin, laws transgressed, mercies abused, talents neglected, time misspent, opportunities un-

improved, offers rejected, threatenings disregarded. Inwards, an understanding blind and dark; a will stubborn and perverse; affections earthly and sensual; a conscience black and guilty, stained with crimes, and with its thousand mouths clamouring, "Guilty, guilty! Vengeance, vengeance! Eternity, eternity!" Around him demons are howling, and hail him to the flames of hell. Riches cannot help him; Death will not take a bribe; Satan will make no compromise. Honours cannot protect him; the King of Terrors laughs at earthly dignity; and titles do not terrify the fiends of the infernal gulf. Power and might cannot cope with death, nor shield from the unerring dart. Wisdom and craft cannot elude his pursuit; darkness cannot conceal you from his all-penetrating eye. Whither will the dying sinner turn? His companions cannot help him. Friends may gather round his dying couch, but their tears and lamentations cannot retain the departing spirit. And what hope can he derive from the Bible? The threatenings he knows are his own; the promises he dare not claim. The Spirit he has all his life quenched and grieved; and upon the blood of Christ he has trampled, and counted it as a common thing. What is he to do? His soul is about to leap into an unknown, invisible world. He turns every way to avoid it, but there is no way of escape; it must be—

"In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement;
Runs to the avenue and shrieks for help,
But shrieks in vain.

How wishfully she looks

On all she's leaving, now no longer her's.

A little longer, yet a little longer,
Oh might she stay, to wash away her stains,
And fit her for her passage. Mournful sight!

Her eyes weep blood; she groans,
She heaves them big with horror.

But the foe, like a staunch murderer with steady purpose,
Pursues her close through the lane of life;
Nor misses once the track,
Till forced at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin."

When the Honourable Francis Newport came to die, who had been an infidel, he found himself in this situation: he cried out, "Oh, that there was no God, or that this God would cease to be, for I am sure He will have no mercy upon me! O how do I envy the happiness of Cain and Judas." When some friends prayed with him, he turned away his face with noise, and cried that he might not hear them, and cried out, "Tigers, monsters, are you also become devils to torment me and give me a prospect to heaven to make my hell more intolerable?" In awful language

he described his situation, until his voice failed, and he began to struggle and gasp for breath, which, having recovered, with a groan as dreadful and horrid as if it had been more than human, he cried out, "Oh, the insufferable pains of hell and damnation!" and then expired. "Your sins will find you out"—

(4.) *At the judgment-day.* "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after death the judgment." "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." Jehovah Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God. The sound shall reverberate from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth, and shall be heard by all the slumbering dead from pole to pole. The souls from paradise and hell shall come to be united to their bodies, new rising from the tomb, and you shall be found among the innumerable throng. All shall be caught up, and methinks, speaking after the manner of men, on the vast plain of Ether the judgment-seat shall be set, and the books shall be opened. The great Judge, seated on His flaming throne, attended by the hosts of heaven, shall with an eye of flame observe each and everyone of the multitudes, "and every eye shall see Him, they also who pierced Him shall look on Him and mourn." Every sinner shall mourn apart—no one will be lost, unnoticed, unregarded, or undistinguished among the people of the earth. Methinks I see Adam, the father of all the human race, called to sit on an eminence at the tribunal. The pages of the book are unfolded where his actions are inscribed, and he is judged according to the things contained in the book. He is placed at the right hand side or on the left, according as his conduct may have been. I hear then Eve, the mother of all living, called to the bar, and after her their sons and daughters in regular succession. I see all your forefathers, your immediate parents, and finally yourselves—you sinners called to the bar, and there "be sure your sins will find you out." With a gloomy countenance, on which hell itself is pictured, with a hideous body, a guilty conscience, and a miserable soul, you take your stand, and are surveyed by angels, devils, and men. The awful pages are found, at the top of which I find your name inscribed. There is a long list of crimes, the pages are blackened with iniquity. Your sins are read, sins of the heart and of the life. The Judge questions you, "I gave thee laws; didst thou obey them?" "No; he has transgressed them a thousand and a thousand times." "I gave My blood for thy redemption; was it ever sprinkled upon thy conscience?" "No; he trampled it under his feet." "I gave him My Spirit; did he improve the gift?" "No; he quenched His influence, and resisted the Holy Ghost." "I gave him My holy word; did he value it, love it, and make it

his own?" "No; he despised it, neglected it, denied it." "I gave him My Sabbaths; did he keep them holy?" "No; he profaned and polluted them." "I sent My servants to invite him to accept the offers of mercy; did he hear them, and accept of the overtures?" "No; he hated to see or to hear them." "I commanded him to pray without ceasing; did he do so?" "No; from week's end to week's end he was never found on his knees, praying for mercy." "I gave him riches; did he improve them for a valuable purpose?" "No; he abused them for the worst of purposes." "I gave him children; did he train them up in the way they should go?" "No; he brought them up in the nurture and admonition of the devil." "I chastened and corrected him; had it any good effect?" "No; the more he was chastised, the more he rebelled." Devils will gnash their teeth with joy to hear it, and you must turn off to the left. "Be sure your sins will find you out."—

5. *In the flames of hell.* There the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, and there your sins will for ever find you out. All the evil passions and tempers—called by one, not improperly, "the dogs of hell"—will be let loose upon you, and they will tear you in pieces, prey upon your vitals, and there will be none to deliver. Busy, meddling Memory will muster up in barbarous succession all your sins and crimes and vices; all the sermons you have heard, the Sabbaths you have misspent, the opportunities you have neglected; and as soon as memory has brought them up, Conscience will seize them, and with whips like scorpions lash you for ever with many stripes. This worm at the heart will ever gnaw, and never die, whilst your bodies shall be wrapped in sheets of sulphurous flame; and thus, tossed to and fro, driven by the storm of God's wrath on the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Every person you meet in these dreary regions will but increase your pangs, and fan your flames. Will you meet a lost child, an impenitent son? How will he gnash his teeth, and curse the day he ever saw your face, and accuse you of neglecting your duty, and of being the cause of bringing him to that place of torment! Will you meet with a sinful companion? How will he howl and wail, and call for double misery on your guilty head, for inducing him to sin with greater greediness! But, above all, how will Satan delight in aggravating your tortures! Here will he say to his fellow-fiends, "This is the fool who believed me rather than the Bible, and obeyed me rather than God. He was a faithful servant. I had only to give the word, and he was ready for all kinds of wickedness. I promised to pay him wages, and now he has received them." And at once he will plunge you lower in the infernal gulf. But, oh! above all, that

awful word will be for ever ringing in your ears, and falling from your lips, and devils will like to pronounce it, to enhance your pains! "Eternity! Eternity! Eternity!" The sound will for ever reverberate through the caverns of hell. "Eternity! Eternity!" We notice—

III. THE CERTAINTY OF THIS PUNISHMENT. "Be sure your sin will find you out." Upon this subject we need entertain no doubt. No need to entertain any hope or expectation that we shall go unpunished. It is no fancy, no speculation, no conjecture, no peradventure. It is as fast, as sure as the government of the world by the providence of God; as sure as God's word and oath can make it; and as sure as the existence of your sins. Your sins may be secret and concealed, you may have committed them under the cover of darkness and privacy; no human eye may have discovered your secret haunts of wickedness; no human being may have heard the footsteps of your iniquity; yet there is an Eye that sees, there is nothing hid that shall not be revealed. "Be sure your sin will find you out." Your sins, in your estimation, may have been rare and solitary. You have not been a regular, habitual sinner; it is only by an occasional deviation and irregularity; and you are buoying yourselves up with the deceitful hope that your few sins will be overlooked. But one leak is enough to sink a ship; one sin unrepented of will sink you into eternal misery. "Be sure your sin will find you out." Your sins may be palliated and excused. You may throw a veil over them, and use many gross excuses to varnish and gloss them. You may blame the depravity of your nature, the strictness of the law, the power of Satanic influence; or you may suppose that your sins are more than overbalanced by your acts of mercy. But sin cannot be veiled. The law will hear no excuse, it admits of no compromise, it can receive no human atonement. "Be sure your sin will find you out." Your sins may be fashionable and popular. You urge that you are not alone, that it is common thus to act, that you are only like your fellow-creatures; so much the worse. The fashionableness of sin cannot destroy its sinfulness; the popularity of transgression cannot annul the law of God. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished." "Be sure your sin will find you out." Your sins, in your account, may be pleasing and profitable; as convenient as a right eye, as commodious as a right hand. They may have been long the inmates of your heart, and have been long entwined in your affections; to deprive you of them would be to deprive you of your only pleasure; yet, like John's book, though in your mouth it may be sweet, yet it shall make your belly bitter. "Your sin will find you out." Your sins may have

been constant and habitual; you have practised them long, and therefore, as they have never found you out hitherto, you are hoping it will ever be the case. Because sentence against your evil work is not executed speedily, therefore your heart is fully set in you to do evil. But though justice is long delayed, it will overtake you, and will be heavier for the delay. "Be sure your sin will find you out." You may be sure of it—

1. *From the character of God's government.* Purity is one of the essential attributes of Deity. He can as soon cease to be as cease to be holy; and whilst this holiness remains there must be in Him an intense aversion to all sin. It must be an object of His abhorrence and detestation. It is true God is love; but there are characters who take such erroneous and defective views of His love as entirely to destroy His purity and equity. "God is merciful," say they; "therefore He will not punish us. He has given His Son for us; therefore He will not fulfil His threatenings." But the gift of His Son is far from being an argument against God's justice; it is rather an argument for it. If God had not given His Son for you, you might then perhaps have pleaded for some demonstration of His mercy, that He might prove Himself loving to man; but now, as He has given His Son, and you reject this best, this only remedy for your restoration and salvation, what hope can there be of your salvation, that your sins will pass unpunished? Your sins since the death of Christ are tinged with a deeper dye and are of a more aggravating nature. They are not only sins against justice and purity, but against mercy and amazing love. They are not only sins against Him who formed the heavens, the sun, and moon, and stars, but against Him who visited our first parents in the garden of Eden, against Him who agonised and felt the unutterable pangs of death in the garden of Gethsemane. Sins not only against the law, but against the Gospel. And can you hope to escape punishment? "Yes," you answer; "God is merciful." True; but you will not have His mercy. It is offered through Christ, and if you will not have it upon this plan, you can have it upon no plan. If you will not be saved Christ's way, you can be saved no way. If you will not have mercy upon His terms, you must take the consequences, you must suffer His indignation to the uttermost. Surely, if you survey God's government impartially, you will no longer trust in this broken reed. He is omnipresent and omniscient, and consequently He knows all your sins. He looks through all your glosses and coverings, and His eye, as a flame, penetrates the inmost recesses of your heart. He is holy and pure, and consequently He hates all sin. This He has demonstrated in ten thousand instances. He is just and equitable, and conse-

quently His anger is excited against you because of your sin. "God is angry with the wicked every day." He is faithful to His threatenings, for they are binding and obligatory as His promises; and therefore He must punish your sins. You cannot escape, it is an impossibility. Sin, wherever it is found, must be punished. Your sin must be punished either in your Substitute or in yourself; and as you will not accept the atonement made for you by your Mediator, you must bear your own penalty. "Be sure your sin will find you out"—

2. *From the threatenings of His Word.* His Word is truth, and what He has said He will do: it must come to pass. He "is not man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The wages of sin is death." "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." "Upon the wicked God will rain fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: that shall be the portion of their cup." "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the smoke of their torment shall ascend up for ever and ever." "There their worm dieth not, and the fire shall not be quenched." "There shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." "The fearful (such as would not own Christ through the fear of persecution), the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire." Do these threatenings mean anything or nothing? If they mean anything, do they not mean that your sins will not be unpunished? "Be sure your sins will find you out"—

3. *From universal experience.* If you had before you the universal history of all mankind, you would not find a single instance where sin unpardoned was unpunished. The first sinner, Satan, was found out, and he has been suffering ever since. The sin of Adam and Eve found them out. The sin of Cain found him out, though there was no human witness of the deed, and he might think himself secure. When God questioned him on the subject, he began to equivocate and say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" But though there was no living witness, yet the voice of his brother's blood cried unto the Lord from the ground. The sins of the antediluvians and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah found them out. The sin of Jacob found him out in the numerous troubles that afterward rolled upon him. The sins of his sons found them out. The sins and cruelty of Pharaoh and the Egyptians found them out in the plagues and their destruction in the Red Sea. The sins of the

Israelites in the wilderness found them out, so that but two who had left Egypt entered the promised land. The sin of Moses found him out in the same manner. The sin of Nadab and his companions found them out; they were swallowed up in the earth. The sins of the Canaanites found them out; they were discomfited before the Israelites. The sin of Samson found him out; he was betrayed by the instrument of his wickedness into the hands of his foes. The sin of Saul, of David, and of Absalom found them out. The sin of the prophet, deceived by the lying prophet, found him out; for he was slain by the lion. The sins of the wicked kings of Israel and Judah found them out, and at last they were all carried away into captivity. The sin of Haman, who plotted the destruction of all the Jews, found him out on the gallows fifty cubits high, that he himself had made. The sins of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar found them out; the sins of Peter and Judas found them out; the sins of Ananias and Sapphira and of Simon Magus found them out. The sin of Herod found him out; he was eaten up by worms. The aggravated sins of the Jewish nation found them out; their nation was destroyed, their city was taken, their temple was burnt, a million and a half of the people were slain, one hundred thousand were sold into captivity, and the rest were dispersed into every part of the earth, who yet continue a monument of God's awful vengeance. And can you expect to escape? Shall you be an exception to this universal rule? "Be sure your sins will find you out"—

4. *From the irritating aggravations under which they have been committed.* No apology of ignorance can be offered for your conduct. You have sinned against light, against knowledge, against conviction. You have sinned with the Word of God in your houses, with the light of heaven in your minds, and the cries of Conscience in your ears. You have sinned against the long-suffering of God, the dying love of Christ, the influences of the Holy Spirit. You have sinned when you knew you were sinning, and when you knew you must either repent of your sins or be eternally miserable. The sins of the heathen may be large as mole-hills, but yours are large as mountains. His may be of a deep dye, but yours are red as crimson; his may be like straws, but yours are like the cedars of Lebanon. You may be sure that your sins will find you out. You have heard the Gospel: the threatenings, the promises, the love of God, the mercy of Christ, and you have deliberately gone from the house of God and sinned again. You have hardened your heart, stiffened your neck, and steeled your conscience. "Be sure your sin will find you out." You are forging a ponderous chain, in which you yourself will be bound for ever. Every sin is a

link, and although it has in it a thousand links already, every day you are engaged in forging and adding new ones. The chain is already so long, that you can see no end to it. Know you not that the wrath of God will be bound to it like a mill-stone, and that it will be bound round your neck, and will for ever sink you lower, and lower, and lower in the bottomless pit for ever, and ever, and ever? What, and is not this monstrous chain heavy enough? Why will you take the pains of riveting it to your own misery? Oh! cease to be fools, enemies of your own peace. But that your sins may never find you out in the punishment, find them out by repentance, seek for pardon, make Christ your refuge, shelter yourselves from the wrath of God.

But is there no way of escape from this punishment? Yes. What is it? Shall I give up my sins and become religious and charitable? Shall I give up drunkenness and become sober? my worldly mindedness and become charitable? Shall I spend the residue of my days in humiliation to atone for my sins? No; some of those things are very good, but present for past cannot atone. If you could begin now to live without sin, your past sins would find you out. What is it? Repentance towards God. Find out your sins by examination, confession, prayer, and repentance. *Have faith in Christ.* Then they will be blotted out, then they cannot find you out, they will be cast as a stone into the depths of the sea.

One of these you must do—either this, find out your sins, or they will find out you. Now make your choice. It is put to you again, and this may be the last time; the scale is vibrating for hell or heaven, repentance or hell-fire, salvation or damnation.

Materials for Sermons.

XVIII.—THE BLESSED DEAD.

“And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”—REV. xiv. 13.

NATURALLY we have a fear of death: in bondage to this fear. No simple remedy of man can liberate us. Atheism, bravado, moral goodness self-acquired, philosophy, wealth, poverty—neither nor all remove the fear of dying. The only

remedy of the fear of dying is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the revelations of God concerning the future of those who are interested in His life and death.

I. THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD. Who are they? Or what is it to die in the Lord? To die in the Lord is—

1. To die *in the faith which unites to Him.*
2. To die *in the love that obeys Him.*
3. To die *in the nature which is like Him.*
4. To die *in the Spirit that is received from Him.*

Thus, dying in the Lord embodies the same particulars as living in the Lord.

Dying *in the Lord.* Can there be such a thing as *death in the Lord*? This is human or earthly language. They who are in the Lord only die so far as the tabernacle or house which they occupy goes. Their spirits which are in the Lord live on the other side the boundary. Hence—

II. We are called to look at the CONDITION of them who die in the Lord—"Blessed." In what are they blessed? Certainly, not in simply dying: no blessedness in death itself. Not in that they have had a respectable interment, or lie in a quiet resting place beneath the flowers and evergreens of survived affection, or in the mausoleum of wealth, or in the vaults of ecclesiastical and national and literary greatness. The grave, like death, anywhere, is in no sense blessed. Not in that they remain in unconsciousness and corruption. Blessed are they—

1. *In that they rest from their labours.* (1.) From the toils and vexations of life. (2.) From the temptations and conflicts of life. (3.) From the sorrows and sufferings of life. (4.) From the doubts, fears, frailties, and sins of life. (5.) From the general and particular labours into which they entered for the support and spread of religion among men.

2. *In that their works follow them.* (1.) The works of those who live and die in the Lord are works of faith and love; works such as were produced by the grace of God under the agency of the Spirit of God; works, these, which meet with Divine approval and acceptance. They follow them; or, as it is rendered by some expositors, follow *with* them. (2.) As the criteria of character in the judgment through which they pass immediately after death, as to whether they are entitled to heaven, &c. By their works they shall be known. (3.) As

the criteria of their recompense in heaven. Watts says, "Each work hath its distinct reward." Yea, says Jesus, "A cup of cold water," &c. If a cup of cold water, what of the higher and greater? The sum total, everlasting life.

3. It may mean, too, that their works, in their influence for good upon children, friends, neighbours, churches, shall live after they have gone to rest. The instructions they have given shall not die; the charities they have established shall continue: the comforts they have poured into sorrowful hearts shall spread and live like a wave of light or a sound in the air.

4. The works are distinct from the labours. The labours cease, the works live. They rest from their labours, they are recompensed for their works. There is a possibility of being much labour, and small works produced. Works, as the effects of labour, incited and sustained by the Spirit and grace of the Lord Jesus, shall live and follow the labourer. But works as the effects of self, vainglory, &c., shall live in no sense to which the text refers.

5. What a delightful word is this word "blessed" as used anywhere, and especially in connection with the dead! Its origin in this connection is not of earth or men. It is from heaven.

6. "Shall follow him"—that is, they shall so follow him into heaven itself, that the *spirit* of them shall abide with him ever, and continue in a living and active frame through eternity:

7. They are blessed *henceforth*. That is, from the time of their death. No annihilation or cessation of existence for any period, either for them or their works.

III. The AUTHORITY on which we are required to believe in the blessed state of them who die in the Lord.

1. John the Apostle is the human who makes it known unto us. Consider his character as worthy reliance.

2. He does not give it as his own opinion self-conceived. He received it in a voice from heaven. Had this voice come from hell or earth we must have questioned its reliableness; but it came from heaven, the place of truth and purity.

3. We have the specific utterance of the *Spirit* on which to rely. "Yea, saith the Spirit." This is a truth inspired of the Holy Ghost, not only in this passage, but in the general teachings of the Bible.

Conclusion. 1. In order to die in the Lord you must *live* in Him. 2. If our works live after us on earth, and with us in heaven, we should be most zealous in the practice of them by the grace of God. 3. We should not as Christians fear to die, seeing we shall *die in the Lord*, and be blessed from that time. That is our coronation day, our beginning of glory. 4. We should be comforted concerning those who have died in the Lord. 5. Sinners should be aroused to a pursuit of that change which will bring them into Christ, and the exercise of good works.

Illustrations, &c. *

THEY rest from their toils, *because* their time for trial is past; they enter upon their *blessed rest*, *because* of their faith evinced by their works, which therefore “follow with them.” Their works are specified, because respect is had to the coming judgment, wherein every man shall be judged according to his works. His works do not go before, nor even go by his side, but *follow* him at the same time that they go *with* him, as a proof that he is Christ’s.—*Fawcett*.

THE UNSPEAKABLE happiness of them who die in the Lord in heaven doth consist in these things:—1. In the immediate vision and fruition of God. 2. In the society which they have for ever. 3. In the work with which they shall be employed to eternity. 4. In that additional glory which shall for ever rest upon their bodies—(1.) A perfect body. (2.) A spiritual body. (3.) An active body. (4.) An incorruptible body.—*Bishop Hopkins*.

THE GLORY OF HEAVEN.—How transcendent the glory of that world, where there shall be no more sin nor imperfection, where all shall unite in the song, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.” “The glory of the Lord (doth) lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” The idolatrous temple of Diana was so bright and splendid, that the door-keeper always cried to them that entered in, “Take heed to your eyes.” But what faculties of vision must we have to behold the glory of the temple above! If it is said that the righteous themselves shall shine forth as the sun, what will be the splendour of the Eternal Throne? What a delightful change, from this world of darkness and imperfection to that where all shall be light and glory!

NO SICKNESS IN HEAVEN.—*A happy land* that must be where

there shall be neither sickness nor death. A gentleman, travelling in the neighbourhood of London, was accosted by a young man, who was his only companion, in the following terms:—"Sickness, sir, is a very uncomfortable thing: I have been running almost all over London to find out a physician to attend my sister, who is sick." "Yes, sir," replied the gentleman, "sickness is a very uncomfortable thing; but I know a land in which there is no sickness!" "Do you, indeed?" rejoined the young man; "pray, where is it? I have travelled all round the world, and never heard of that land yet!"

NO DEATH IN HEAVEN.—A Christian lady, on her death-bed, in reply to a remark of her brother, who was taking leave of her to return to his distant residence, that he should probably never again meet her in the land of the living, answered, "Brother, I trust we shall meet in the land of the living; we are now in the land of the dying."

UNION IN HEAVEN.—We think much of our Thames; the inhabitants of Egypt, of the Nile; the Hindoo, of the Ganges; the German, of the Rhine; the American, of the St. Lawrence. But go down to the ocean. Ask it, where are these rivers? And could it answer, it would say, "I know no Thames; I know no Rhine; I know no Nile; they are all lost in the ocean!" So the distinctions of sects, &c., are but rivers, which will be lost in the ocean of heaven's bliss. There is but one heaven.

XIX.—WINTER AND SPRING.

"For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."—SOL. SONG ii. 11, 12.

THESE words may be considered as emblematical of three states of experience.

I. AS EMBLEMATICAL OF AN UNRENEWED SOUL. Winter, this is—

1. *Dark.* So the unrenewed heart. Men love darkness rather than light. Romans i. 21; Ephesians iv. 18; Isaiah lx. 1, 2.

2. *Cold.* How cold man's heart towards God, though boiling with fervour towards pleasure, business, &c.

3. *Hard.* Frozen. Mark x. 5; Romans ii. 5; Ezekiel xxxvi. 26; Exodus iv. 21; Psalm xciv. 8; Isaiah vi. 9, 10.

4. *Barren.* Ephesians v. 11. Barren of *good*, but fruitful indeed in evil. See Galatians v. 19-21; Matthew xii. 35.

5. *Dreary.* So the unsanctified heart. Miserable—restless—no true peace—no satisfaction. Men rush after pleasure—honour—riches—amusement. And the eager chase speaks man's immortality. The ox in the mead has a rest to which its owner, if unsaved, is a stranger. Why? He has an immortal spirit which cries, Give, give, and cries to earthly objects in vain, and must *ever* cry in vain.

II. WINTER IS EMBLEMATICAL OF THE LUKEWARM CHRISTIAN. When is it winter with the believer?

1. When prayer is regarded merely as a duty, and secret devotion is neglected or becomes a burden.

2. When the Word is neglected, and so loses its power and sweetness to the soul.

3. When the house of God is less attractive than formerly, and its services are lightly forsaken.

4. When the Sabbath ceases to be a delight.

5. When faith gives place to unbelief—the spirit of the world is indulged, and sin becomes less distasteful.

Then it is midwinter in the soul. Do you belong to either of these classes? Your case is a sad one, but not hopeless. We have in the text—

III. AN EMBLEM OF THE RENEWAL OF THE SOUL THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. "For, lo, the winter is past," &c. Then there will be—

1. *New life.* As in spring signs of the renewal of nature appear on all hands, so when the soul becomes a partaker of the Divine nature through faith in Christ, old things pass away, and all things become new. Born again of the Spirit, &c.

2. *New feelings.* "Flowers appear," &c. "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks," &c. Psalm xlii. 1, 2; ciii. 1, 5.

3. *New joy.* Now Christ is to him the fairest among ten thousand, everything has become new. "The time of singing of birds is come." Isaiah xii. 1, 2; Psalm xl. 1-3.

4. *New prospects.* 1 John iii. 1-3. Glorious prospects open before the renewed soul. The mists and fogs of winter clear away, and the spirit sees by faith the land that is afar off. Isaiah xxxv. 10; 1 Peter i. 3-5; John xvii. 24.

Is it winter with you? O, awake to your high and glorious

privilege. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come." "Awake, awake, put on thy strength:" the church, the world needs your help. Sinner, arouse you, or you are for ever undone. Christ invites you, the Spirit strives. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Cold-hearted Christian, think of your responsibilities, and let the love of Christ constrain you to earnest service. Can you adopt the words of the text as your own? Then remember, you may have spring time all the year round.

Bridgewater.

J. CHAMPION.

XX.—PRIVATE DEVOTION.

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."—MATT. vi. 6.

MAN is not required to retire, like a hermit, to a cave, or a monk to his cell, and pass away his days in solitude. He was not made for solitude. His powers both of body and soul forbid it. He was created for action, and is to continue in well-doing.

On the other hand, man is not to parade his doings. "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." He is not to worship God ostentatiously, "but in spirit and in truth." The Pharisees were very ostentatious. They sought the praise of men. They chose the corners of streets—the most public positions, that they might be seen and heard. But we are cautioned of this, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet," &c.

From these words let us observe—

I. THE DUTY OF PRIVATE PRAYER.

1. *It is a duty we must perform personally.* We personally confess our sins to God. (1 John i. 9.) We must personally enter our closets, that we may obtain grace to help in time of need, and be preserved in salvation.

2. *It is a duty we must perform frequently.* These seasons of retirement are peculiarly adapted to benefit the soul. If we would but enter the closet more, we should possess increased hatred to sin, holiness of heart, and power with God. The scenes of vice and vanity would be less familiar to our minds, and we should always be awake to the temptations of the world and Satan.

3. *It is a duty we must perform carefully.* Our words should ever be in harmony with the desire of our hearts. We must say what we mean, and mean what we say. The heart must indite a good matter, and the tongue be as the pen of a ready writer. "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathens do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." (Verse 7.) Pray to pray. "Lord, teach us how to pray."

4. *It is a duty we must perform fully.* Not partially, but wholly as circumstances require. It is our privilege "to make our requests known unto God" in *everything* appertaining to our temporal as well as our spiritual interests. We may bring God into every thought, act, and circumstance of our lives, however trivial they may appear. Let us do so. "Commit thy way," &c.

5. *It is a duty we must perform confidentially.* "Your Father knoweth," &c. (Verse 8.) He has promised these things. Hence we must confide in the promise, and patiently wait in full expectation of an answer.

6. *It is a duty we must perform cheerfully.* If we are true to God, there are times, and these times are frequent, when private devotion has a peculiar charm to our souls. At these times let us retire from the world, enter the closet, shut the door, and be alone in communion with God. Can we not say—

"I have been there, and still would go;
'Tis like a little heaven below."

Oh, to be with God! The Father is there!

Let us observe—

II. THE THINGS ENJOINED IN PRIVATE PRAYER. "When thou prayest."

1. "*Enter into thy closet.*" A chamber or any place where we can perform this duty with the utmost privacy.

In secret we commune both with God and ourselves, and gaining a better knowledge of ourselves and the will of God, we are enabled to lay our plans better for the future.

Enter the closet then to perform the various exercises the closet calls forth—

(1.) Examine your own heart. (2.) Study the Word of God. (3.) Contemplate the state of the world. (4.) Supplicate the throne. (5.) Consecrate yourselves to God.

2. "*Shut to thy door.*" Pray with as much secrecy as possible. Isa. xxvi. 20. Shut thy door against all opposed to this holy exercise. Against *human applause*. If we seek human applause, it will take us from the closet. "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are," &c. (Verse 5.) Against *the world*. Shut out the world with all its vain glitter, then you can engage more fully with God. "Pray to thy Father who is in secret."

Let us pass on to notice—

III. THE INCENTIVES TO PRIVATE PRAYER.

1. *The omnipresence of God.* "Pray to thy Father who *is in secret*. God is everywhere. In the dark as well as in the light, in private as well as in public, on earth as well as in heaven. Blessed thought! God everywhere! If we go to the heavens He is there; to the depths of the sea, He is there; to the ends of the earth, He is there. Psalm cxxxix. 7-12.

2. *The omniscience of God.* "Thy Father who seeth in secret." Upon every person and every earthly scene the eye of God rests. All the actions of men and the circumstances in which all men are placed are seen of God. "His eyes behold." They who hide themselves from their fellows to pour out their souls to God are seen of Him to whom they pray. "Thou God seest me."

3. *The omnipotence of God.* "Shall reward thee openly." The power of God consists in His ability to act according to His promise, without impediment or resistance. "With God all things are possible." Mark x. 27. He is an Almighty God, and will reward you openly.

(1.) He will prosper you in soul—inspire with peace—promote your true prosperity and real happiness.

(2.) He will defend you from all your spiritual enemies. They are numerous, vigilant, powerful, but God will enable you to conquer "No weapon," &c.

(3.) He will incite you to obedience. How important is this. Rev. xxii. 14.

(4.) He will enable you to live holily. "He will preserve you blameless," &c.

(5.) He will enable you to die triumphantly. Ps. xxiii. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 55-57.

In conclusion—

1. Do you engage in private devotion?

2. Does God reward you openly? Are you prospering abundantly in Divine things?

J. B. HORRERY.

Open-air Services.

GOD'S UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."—2 Cor. ix. 15.

WHO does not like a "gift"? It may be worth much, it may be far inferior to what we have every day of our lives, but there is something so pleasant about it—as in a garden a single bright-winged butterfly attracts and entrances us more than the flowers do, however varied and beautiful they may be. Is it not because the flowers are our own—we are familiar with them—but the butterfly is a surprise, and we feel flattered by his freewill visit to us?

Who does not remember the toy presents of our childhood—the dolls, the Noah's ark, the hobby-horse; and then the more solid presents of our boy or girlhood—the charming books, and the live animals entrusted to our care? And even when we are grown up we are not above them. No Christmas turkey eats so sweetly as that which arrives with a card and compliments; and no cloak and hood so become "baby" as those which a kind friend smuggled into the house in a bandbox. The custom of making presents is as old as the Bible. We read of them in Genesis. Jacob, for instance, was remarkable for them. We read of his gift of a coat of many colours to Joseph; his gift of sheep and cattle to his brother Esau; his gift of "a little honey, spices, and almonds" to the ruler of Egypt. Araunah's kingly gift to his monarch is another Scripture example; so is the wise men's gift to the infant Jesus, and Mary's precious ointment poured on His head.

Let us notice—

I. The GIVER of the gift spoken of in the text.

St. Paul says that this is God: "Thanks be unto *God* for *His* unspeakable gift." Directly you have a present you inquire, *Who sent it?*—for a deal depends upon that—whether it comes from a friend or an enemy, from a poor person or a rich person. You would not expect much from those who are struggling for a living—it is almost painful to have them bring you of their poverty; but if the Queen gives anything, it is taken for granted that it will be splendid—a gold watch, or a diamond pin, or a pearl bracelet. If she condescended to enter a cottage, people

would be sure to look on the chair for a five-pound note or a pile of sovereigns. We should say, "She is so liberal, so noble, and so wealthy, she drops presents, as an engine does sparks, wherever she goes."

Now God has "every good and perfect gift" in His hand; they are but the crumbs which fall from His table. He has been *giving from the foundation of the world*, and yet He is not in the least impoverished. How can a Creator be? A Being who by a word can turn water into wine, and multiply a baker's loaf into bread for thousands of hungry mouths! And He is as willing to give as He is able. It is His delight to load us with benefits. No mother is happier in kissing her darlings, decking them with her own furs on a cold morning, and seeing them leap for joy around her, than is our Heavenly Father in dropping blessings on us, and crowning us with His tender mercies. And yet He is so infinite, and we so feeble; He is so holy, and we are so sinful. The Psalmist turned from considering the moon and the stars to cry, "Lord, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" How well may we turn from considering God's unspeakable gift, and join in that cry!

But so it is. God *is* mindful of us—the glorious God; and the unspeakable gift is actually *His* present to us.

II. Notice the ~~err~~ itself.

It is Jesus, the meek and lowly Jesus of the Gospels; and everything else, such as forgiveness, grace, eternal life in Him.

A white carrier dove alighted upon a prisoner's floor. The prisoner said, "It is merely a pigeon;" and he threw it a crust, and then went on with his work. By-and-bye he tried to drive it away. At length he was struck with its tameness, and catching it up, he found tied beneath its wing a letter, promising him aid in escaping, and enclosing a latch-key and a sum of money. The dove had been thrown in from the street on this errand.

Now, similarly, Jesus is nought to us until we receive Him into our bosoms as our own; then, with and in Him, we have whatever is needful to deliver us from Satan, and insure us God's immediate and everlasting favour! God intends that He shall fetch us back to more than Adam lost us in Eden; that He shall be our "righteousness" and our "strength." Jesus is yours and mine, if we open our hearts to Him. "Unto us a

child is given," said the prophet Isaiah. The angel re-echoed that when he said to the shepherds, "*Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*" The apostle is sounding it on here to us, when he says, "Thanks be unto God for His *unspeakable gift*" to us—Jesus!

It was the gift of a *Redeemer*, without whose death we must have perished.

It was the gift of a *Teacher*, without whose instructions we must have wandered on in ignorance.

It was the gift of a *Brother*, without whose sympathy we must have fainted at the prospect of duty and trial.

But this anticipates our third point.

III. Notice the greatness of the gift.

He could have given us myriads of things which would have excited our astonishment, but they could not have helped us. What could a planet or a comet have done for us, though they were to be called after us, and obey our orders? But He chose for us what was superior to the whole universe; just what we required, but what we could not have dared to hope for—He gave us His dearest, His best, His co-equal!

It was indeed an "*unspeakable gift*," for it was *so amazing*! It was next to Jehovah, and it was Jehovah. It was the Owner of the flock giving Himself to rescue the flock from the snow-drift or the precipice. It was the Almighty giving Himself for His creatures. The cherubim and seraphim must have hidden their faces in dismay as they saw Him carrying His cross to Calvary! They had been wont to worship Him, to fly like lightning at His command.

It was "*unspeakable*," because He is *so surpassingly lovely*. He was lovely in His character, in His speech, in His actions, in His temper, in His devotion to God and us. What guilt was there in Him? was He not without blemish the express image of God? What light shone out of Him and hovered around Him! How His garments smelt of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces!

It was "*unspeakable*," because it was *for such vile objects*. We were so mean and undeserving. How you would admire a princess who walked miles in a burning desert to relieve a company of lepers, or who sold herself into slavery to be of use

to a plantation of miserable negroes! But Jesus did more than this for us, who were worms in comparison with Himself.

It is "unspeakable," because it does *such vast things for us*. Without it we were certainly doomed to hell; without it, it would have been impossible for God to pardon us.

It rids us of our burdens; it sheds peace abroad in our consciences; it unfolds to us the smile of God; it is our key to the grave; it is our title to mansions in the skies. When ages upon ages of joy unspeakable have gone by, we shall owe every moment of it to God's "unspeakable gift." Then—

IV. Notice the gratitude which becomes us.

A bedridden Esquimaux said to a missionary, "When you begin to read to me about Jesus, sir, I am as hard as a block of ice; when you finish and go away, I am melted into water." "The story of Jesus," said an African, "is my hymn, my prayer, my Bible. I weep over it when I can't sing about it, and I sing over it when I can't weep about it. This is true, that I thank God for it from the sole of my foot to the top of my head."

And what are we about? where is our harp? Can we not thank God for it with *our lips*? Ought we not to try to praise Him for it when we wake and ere we sleep, as well as in our churches and chapels? Closet melodies should be as frequent as closet petitions. Have Watts, and Wesley, and Cowper written their exquisite verses for private use in vain? Do they never rise to God from our lips?

Can we not thank Him with *our spirits*? When there is no music outwardly, there may be music within. Pious affection may be kindled by recollection, and glow and burn as a fire; and God can mark its secret blaze "under the fig-tree."

Lastly, can we not thank Him by *our conduct*; by walking before Him so blamelessly and wisely that we may testify to others how faithful His promises are—how easy His yoke—how real and powerful His presence with those who have accepted His unspeakable gift? Endeavour throughout this twelvemonth to "adorn" your Christian profession; and then, assuredly, you will be thanking Him for it.

But *have* you accepted this unspeakable gift yet? Suppose I met a royal messenger returning from your door with an ornament which an Empress might be proud to wear; and he said,

"This is a gift from Her Majesty to that young lady who bears Her Majesty's name, but I cannot obtain admission; I have knocked till I am tired. This is the fifth or sixth attempt at intervals. She evidently listens; but she is too careless or engaged to attend. Once she glanced at it from behind the curtains; and once she unfastened the lock, and was just slipping the bolt, but her pet dog barked, or her parrot whistled, and she sauntered back to them; so I fear I must report it to Her Majesty, and she will change her purpose regarding it." What should I say to that messenger for you? How could I excuse you and plead for you? But beware lest you are doing that very thing to God's messengers who are commissioned to urge upon you His unspeakable gift!

Is that to be trifled with? Is that to be declined till it suit your convenience? Oh, by the awful consequences of missing it, I beseech you to claim and clasp it as your own this moment!

REV. J. BOLTON.

Pulpit Illustrations.

"We shall be like Him."—1 JOHN iii. 2.

AN old lady whose grey hairs and deformed person bespoke that her time on earth was short, and that she was just on the border of eternity, sat reflecting upon days gone by, when the bloom of youth was upon her cheek, before the keepers of her house trembled, and those that looked out of the windows were dimmed. Tears chased each other down her care-worn cheeks as she compared the past with the present. What a wondrous change had taken place; threescore years and ten found her with grey hairs, wrinkled brow, dimmed eyes, and decayed strength. Suddenly her tears were dried, her heart heaved, her eyes sparkled, her lip quivered with emotion, and she exclaimed, "Precious Jesus! Thou wast slain for sinners when Thou wast but thirty-three years of age, just in the prime of life. When I see Thee I shall lose all my infirmities, and enter into the fulness of life, for I shall be like Thee." "For

there shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days." Isaiah lxx. 20.

O ye bereaved ones, weep no more : that loved one which lies in yonder cold tomb may moulder and crumble into dust, yet what your Jesus said to the weeping Mary and Martha He says to you, "I am the resurrection and the life." "Though after my flesh worms may destroy my body, yet in my flesh I shall see God." "And when I see Him I shall be like Him."

O ye admirers of beauty, you who spend so much time and labour to adorn this house of clay, to make it appear comely, look well to the adorning of the inner man, and then you shall be like Him who is "altogether lovely."—*J. Sherman.*

PRAISE FOR REDEMPTION.

BOUND, every heart ! and every bosom, burn !

Oh, what a scale of miracles is here !

Its lowest round high planted on the skies—

Its towering summit lost beyond the thought

Of man or angel ! Oh, that I could climb

The wonderful ascent with equal praise !

PRAISE, flow for ever, if astonishment

Will give thee leave—my praise for ever flow !

Praise ardent, cordial, constant ; to High Heaven

More fragrant than Arabia sacrificed,

And all her spicy mountains in a flame.

—*Young.*

LABOUR NOT IN VAIN.

"Your labour is not in vain in the Lord."—1 Cor. xv. 58.

"OH DEAR," said Miss L., with a sigh, "I've been a Sunday School teacher for five years ; I've gone regularly through all kinds of weather—sunshine or rain ; I've always managed to fill my place at the school. I've talked earnestly to the children about their souls, and tried to lead them to Jesus ; but it seems all of no use, it has done no good. I've met with no encouragement from my Master, He hasn't given me one little golden ear towards a sheaf. I must give up." . . . "Mother dear, I'm dying ; but I'm not afraid to die—though it seems a sad thing to leave this bright world and you, mother. But I love Jesus, for He has died for me and taken the sting of death away ;

and now what seemed once so dark and sad is all bright, mother, for He has promised to be with me through the valley of death; and beyond there's heaven, where it's all joy, and I shall be there. When I'm gone, mother, you will send and tell Miss L. all about me; because she was the first who told me about my Saviour, and entreated me to love Him." Miss L. didn't "give up;" she toiled on, and met with a rich reward in her work. Disheartened teacher, "go thou and do likewise," for in due season thou shalt reap if thou faintest not.

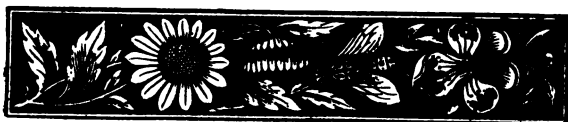
IGNORANT ASKING IN PRAYER.

"Ye know not what ye ask."—*MATT. xx. 22.*

A FOND father was in great distress for a favourite child, whom he apprehended to be dying in its infancy. Several of his friends endeavoured to assuage his grief, but he refused to be comforted. At length the minister on whom he attended offered to pray with him, and desired him to compose his mind, and give up his favourite son to the Divine disposal, since there was no probable hope of his recovery. He replied, "I cannot give him up; and it is my importunate request that God would spare this child to me, whatever may be the consequence." He had his desire; the child recovered, and grew up, if possible, more and more his darling; but he lived to be a thorn in his side, and to pierce his heart with many sorrows. For, just as he came to maturity, he robbed his excellent master, whom before he had often injured. He was seized by the hand of justice—tried—condemned—and died one of the most hardened wretches that ever went out of life in that ignominious manner.

NOT MINDFUL WHENCE OUR MERCIES COME.

SOME years since an humble but pious and devoted coloured minister was preaching to a congregation in one of the cities of New England, and took occasion to illustrate man's ingratitude to God. He said, in quaint language, "Mankind be just like de hogs. Dey go under de acorn-tree, and dey eat de acorn, but dey neber once look up to see where de acorn comes from." It is even so. Multitudes eat, and drink, and sleep, and gather innumerable mercies in their daily lives, but they never think who is the Giver of them or whence they come.



THE LAY PREACHER.

Making Sermons.

WE have heard many conversations, and read many books, and received many lectures on making sermons; but we never discovered a unanimity in the rules laid down and the counsels given. We have heard the experience of many sermon-makers, and have always found that the mode of each differed from the other.

The fact is, the diversity in natural talents, in secular education, in religious attainments, in worldly circumstances, and in the character of congregations, will necessarily occasion diversity in the ways of making sermons. It were just as rational to expect uniformity among mechanics and artists in their ways of doing their work, as to expect uniformity among preachers in making sermons.

There are certain things which every preacher must have in making sermons, the same as every builder in building a house; but in the way of making and in the kind of sermon he wants to make, he need not be guided by another, any more than one builder need be guided by his neighbour in the size and character of his house, and the manner in which he shall build it.

In the first place, every preacher must have the *ground* on which to build a sermon—that is, he must have a text or subject: the subject leading him to a text, or the text leading him to a subject. Without this he can no more

make a sermon than a builder can build a house without a foundation. He should, too, as far as practicable, select that ground which will be best adapted to the structure of the house : or in other words, he should choose for a text the passage which will be most appropriate to his subject ; or if he first select his text, he should select one from which he can draw a subject that will most substantially and beautifully harmonise with the text. Does he, for instance, want to preach on Repentance, he should select a passage that will best sustain his subject, or from which he can most naturally and forcibly draw his subject.

Every preacher ought to have a *plan* of the sermon he is going to make. He may have it in his mind, as conceived in connection with the text or subject, or he may have it written out before him in all its parts and colours. This plan may be one of his own make entirely, or it may be a mixture of his own and another's, or ~~it may~~ be another's, so re-thought and re-constructed that ~~he may~~ truthfully call it his own, and no one may be able to rob him of his claim. But, wherever his plan come from, and whatever it is, whether his own in part or his own altogether, or not his own in any degree, *he must have a plan.* He must understand in what direction he is going to think, what he is going to say, and what he wishes to accomplish. If not, his sermon will be without form and order, and will consist of a jumbled mass, lying helter-skelter ; flat, designless, pointless, useless ; less everything which a sermon ought to have.

He must also have *materials*. A man with ground and plan cannot build a house without materials. Neither can a preacher make a sermon. As the bee makes its honey with sweets from many flowers, and as the builder erects his house with wood, brick, stone, iron, glass, &c., brought from many parts of the world ; so the preacher may gather his materials from every source within his reach. He may collect from nature and society by observation ; he may pick up from conversation ; he may gather from sermons spoken or read ; from commentators, skeletons, sketches, essays, and, in fine, from every open resource within his reach, so that he do it honestly and candidly.

Having gathered his materials, then, like the bee or the builder, he may proceed to form, shape, arrange, &c., in

the erection of the structure, so that when the sermon is preached the hearers shall not be able to accuse him of preaching a sermon made of any particular material, while at the same time they may know that it is no more *original* than is the honey of the bee or the house of the builder.

We know there is, on the part of some preachers, a great jealousy over themselves lest they should be self-accused, or accused by others, of *plagiarism*. This jealousy is commendable in a degree, but there is a possibility of it being carried too far. No man ever did or ever will be able to work without *materials*. A mechanic may have the best tools ever made, but of what use are they without materials. A machine, likewise, of the noblest construction, is useless without materials to work upon. So the noblest mind that the Divine Hand ever created must have materials with which to work from some source or other—Divine or human. The writings of prophets and apostles are the inspirations of another mind than their own, although given in their own peculiar prophetic and apostolic forms. The works of scientific men, painters, and philosophers are productions evolved out of previously existing materials of a primary or secondary nature. No one in any degree acquainted with the world of literature will fail to discover how authors have sipped from each other's fountains or dug in each other's quarries. Literature is like the rings in a tree, the last period of it has come out of and rests upon the previous.

Nor is this derogatory to mind any more than it is derogatory to body to live on the dead materials of nature. Living brains which work, must live and work on the brains of others, either dead or alive, the same as *they* did on those that preceded them. There is no *independent* thought any more than there is an *independent* man.

We desire our readers to observe that these remarks in no wise are intended to favour plagiarism, but to encourage *thought*. There is as much difference between the two as between taking food uncooked and unchewed into the body, and buying the materials, cooking them, masticating them, digesting them, and having them become inseparable elements not only in the *support* of the body, but of the body itself.

In respect to the way in which a preacher should *put his materials together*, we have nothing definite to say. We think this must be left very much to his own judgment. Did we give him our way, it might not suit him. Did we tell him of any other way, that might not fit either. Did we lay down fifty rules, perchance not one would be observed by him.

But while we thus speak, we would have the preacher bear in mind that he is bound to study the way which shall be most conducive to the end for which he is called to preach. If, after praying over it, after studying Scripture and other models, after experimenting, after taking counsel with his superiors, he find simple *mental* preparation best suited to him and his work, let him adopt that method. Or if he find writing in full and committing the substance to memory best adapted to him and the end of preaching, let him adopt this. The method in which he can be most happy, most free, most powerful, and most useful in preaching he is bound to adopt, whether it is one peculiar to himself, or whether it is one in common with many others. And he himself, after trying various, must be his own judge which to him is the best.

In making sermons regard should be had to the *spirit in which they are made, and the spirit which is put within them*. The latter will materially depend upon the former. If the Spirit of Jesus inspire and permeate your thoughts and feelings, the same Spirit will run as a Divine current of life, energy, and demonstration through every part of the sermon.

Have respect also to *style*. Avoid monotony and dullness. Avoid bombast and loud-talking. Avoid hard words from science, from Johnson or Webster, from Latin, Greek, or German. No officer charging his men addresses them in learned and pompous terms which they do not understand. A preacher aiming to save souls by his sermons should put them together in language plain, direct, clear, forcible. Do not adopt a style to suit a morbid taste—a taste which courts the gew-gaw, the flashy, the magniloquent. Rather have regard to those in your congregation who come for instruction, for direction, for comfort, for help in Divine things. Do not be frightened at people saying, “How simple! how easy!

anyone might preach in that way." It is easier to be obscure than clear, and vaunting than simple. A person once said to a preacher, "I expected to hear from such a learned man as you something else than a discourse marked by great simplicity." "Ah," replied he, "it needs all my learning to be simple." Many sermons are considered profound which are only obscure. A mother seeing her boy wading in water which she thought was deep enough to drown him, was much alarmed, when the boy, to relieve her fears, cried out, "O mother, it's not deep, but muddy." In the composition of a sermon, "beauty, clearness, and depth are properties which may be all combined, and should all be aimed at. Each and every sermon should be like the Rhone where it darts impetuous on its way beneath the bridge of Geneva, deep, in colour blue, and beautiful as the cloudless azure, and withal so translucent that you see down into its bed as if air, not water, were the medium you looked through."

In making sermons due regard should be had to the *texts* and *subjects*. Be not curious in this particular. Let both be such as will suit you and suit your congregations. The central subject should be JESUS. Let Him be "all and in all." Whatever else you take as your theme, let them all revolve around this, drawing thence life, beauty, and power. This is the theme that maintains its freshness when all others fade and die—the theme to which congregations will listen when they will not to any others.

In making sermons there should be a due regard to the preacher himself. Let him know himself, know his power, know his place, and not aim at what is too high, or too deep, or too broad, or too grand for him, so that there may not appear a disproportion and a failure in the work.

In making sermons a free use should be made of the *Bible*, for proof texts, for illustrative texts, and for expository texts; so that Bible light may shine upon and through the whole, giving to the sermons the authority of God.

In making sermons there should be a free and earnest invocation of the Spirit of God, to render His assistance in all, and to infuse His influences in all.

There should also be a constant remembrance of the

aim and end of preaching. That is, saving souls and honouring God. Let the preacher in making his sermons often pause to ask, "What now is my object and aim? In taking this text, in choosing this subject, in using this argument, in inserting this illustration, is it to make me appear conspicuous, or Jesus Christ? Is it to amuse or to instruct? Is it to interest or to convince? Is it to please or to edify?"

Biblical and Theological Themes.

THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE doctrine of the Holy Spirit's witness to the fact of our acceptance or reconciliation with God is *expressly taught* in Rom. viii. 16. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." It is also confirmed by such texts as the following: "God hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." 2 Cor. i. 22. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. iv. 6. "In whom after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Eph. i. 13. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." 1 John v. 10. And it is exemplified in all those passages which speak of a Christian's confidence in the fatherly mercy of God, as that confidence results from the simple and direct exercise of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Gal. iii. 26. It may therefore be asserted, that this doctrine is in different forms of very frequent occurrence in the Scriptures of the New Testament.

Our object in the present lecture is to inquire into the nature, the properties, and the designs of this witness or testimony of the Holy Spirit.

I. The *Nature* of the Holy Spirit's testimony may be ascertained by an enumeration of the following particulars:—

1. That the penitent sinner, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, believes in our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus complies with the great evangelical condition of salvation.
2. That through this faith it pleases God, in His abundant grace, to perform that act of mercy by which the sinner, as so believing, is accepted, reconciled, or in other words, is pardoned, justified, and adopted.

8. And that the Holy Spirit, by His witness or testimony, immediately ascertains this to the believer, conveys to him an attestation of the fact of his acceptance. "The testimony of the Spirit," says Mr. Wesley, "is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."

II. The *properties* of the Holy Spirit's testimony may perhaps be named as follows:—

1. It is a direct testimony—direct, I mean, in opposition to that evidence which arises from reasoning, inference, or a conclusion regularly drawn from right premises. The circumstances of the case teach this. Is it not also taught, or at least suggested, by the proper meaning of the word *witness* or *testimony*, which certainly in its customary application denotes something direct? Even in a court of justice a witness does not *reason*, but plainly and firmly *testifies of facts*.

2. It is a testimony *common to all true Christians*; to all who have Scriptural and saving faith in Christ. See Gal. iii. 26-29. "But some," it may be said, "who are unquestionably true Christians, doubt or deny the doctrine as we hold it." They may not exactly enter into our views, or use our phraseology, but do they really doubt or deny the thing? I speak of genuine Christians. Do they not love God with a filial love? Do they not so love Him from a sense of His fatherly love? What was it now which conveyed to them that sense of fatherly love?

3. It is clearly a *present* testimony. "The Spirit itself" now "beareth witness." Observe also the form of expression in the other texts, which are quoted in the beginning of this lecture.

4. It cannot but be a most satisfactory testimony, for it is the testimony, not of a creature, but of God the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, who knows how to reveal the Father through the Son, and to fill the soul with a satisfaction which words cannot fully express.

5. It is an habitual testimony, that which Christians are daily to maintain; and blessed are they who thus "know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice *all the day*." Ps. lxxxix. 15, 16.

6. Finally, it is a testimony which may be weakened, interrupted, and lost. Hence such injunctions as Eph. iv. 30. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

III. The *design* of the Holy Spirit's testimony is—

1. To satisfy us concerning our acceptance with God.

2. And by this means, through the accompanying agency of the same blessed Spirit, to create filial love to God in our hearts—to give us power, in this way, over sin, and thus to put us in possession of a new nature; in other words, to regenerate or renew. Does it not, then, plainly appear that the Holy Spirit “worketh all in all?” that His testimony is concerned, as a uniting link, with the relative and real changes of believing man? that by the Spirit’s working, the self-same testimony ascertains the one, and instrumentally produces the other.

REV. J. HANNAH, D.D.

Expositions of some of the shorter Psalms.

BY THE REV. THORNLEY SMITH.

PSALM XI.

“**I**N Jehovah put I my trust.” Such is the key-note of this Psalm, which is no doubt a production of the pen of David. And it is highly probable that it was written during the revolt of Absalom his son, when the conspiracy was strong, and David was compelled to fly from Jerusalem. 2 Sam. xv. Timid counsellors gathered round the king, and advised him to adopt a time-serving policy; but he rejected this advice; and though he did leave the city, yet he was resolved to rely on the Lord Jehovah for help, and experience taught him that he would not rely in vain.

There are some, however, who think that the Psalm has no relation to David’s personal experience, but was written for the instruction of the righteous—to teach this great lesson, that they should never abandon themselves to despair, but rely, even in the most troublous times, on Him whose help can never possibly fail.

And this is, indeed, the lesson, whichever view of the origin of the Psalm we take. It consists of two strophes, in the first of which timorous and fainthearted counsellors address the troubled one, and advise him to seek safety in flight (ver. 1-3); and in the second of which he replies, rejecting their counsel, and expressing his unshaken confidence in God (ver. 4-7). We have, then—

I. **MISTAKEN COUNSEL.** The writer is in trouble, and false, or at least misguided friends, gather round him, and address him in these words. Mark—

1. The *import of their advice*. "How say ye, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" In Palestine, mountains are the principal hiding-places, and to them birds, when exposed to danger on the open plain, naturally flee, and in the woods by which they are begirt find refuge from their foes. In like manner would the advisers of the Psalmist have him seek some hiding-place from the enemies who assailed him. They knew that he was in trouble, and they said to him—said to his soul, as if it were in a fluttering and agitated frame, "flee," make haste and find some safe position where you may hide yourself from the impending storm. To "the rocks of the wild goats" David had fled when hunted by Saul, and some suppose that he is here urged to take a similar course during the revolt of Absalom. But he is surprised and indignant at the advice given him, for it is that of a timid, time-serving policy; and he says, "How say ye to my soul?" &c., and thus he repels the idea at the onset. Is not similar advice often tendered to the good man now? You are in trouble, in perplexity, in danger. And what do false or mistaken friends say to you? They tell you, perhaps, to get into society, to seek help in man, to hasten your escape to some fancied refuge they can tell you of. Time-serving men of this kind there have ever been, and the race is not extinct. O beware of them! They know not what they say; and to have recourse to any merely human schemes for help in the time of trouble, will be utterly useless and vain.

2. The *ground* on which this advice is given. "For lo! the wicked bend their bow," &c. Or "the wicked are bending the bow, nay, they have already placed their arrow upon the string, to shoot in the dark the man who is upright in heart." Cf. 1 Sam. xxvi. 20. Just as the hunter, with bow and arrows (the principal weapons used in former times), aimed at his victim from some secret hiding-place, so do wicked men aim at the righteous, that they may do him all the injury they can. Have we no such enemies to deal with now? Are there no sly, malicious, and insidious attacks made upon the character, if not upon the persons of good men, by foes who dare not openly declare themselves, but who stalk behind anonymous letter-writing in newspapers and reviews? An open enemy it is possible to meet, but one who attacks you from a hiding-place, and whom therefore you cannot see, is always to be feared. And with such an enemy David had to deal, whence the counsel which was thus given to him.

3. The *absolute necessity* of this course. They go further, and they intimate that he must flee; for if, or rather, "*when* the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" By "the foundations" are meant the principles of law and

order, which it was supposed were then subverted. During the revolt of Absalom the very basis of society seemed shaken; and what, therefore, said David's counsellors, what can the good man do? There is no hope for him anywhere. Flight is absolutely necessary. He must escape to some place of refuge while he can. Cf. Isaiah lix. 13-15. Such is the thought entertained and expressed by many in our own time. The Church, they say, is in danger. The principles of truth and justice are imperilled. Society is disorganised and getting out of her course. Nay, the very foundations of Christianity are giving way; and what then can religious professors do? They had better make their escape ere the whole superstructure falls, and they themselves are crushed beneath its ruins. Such is the timid policy of the world. Such is the course not seldom adopted by men whose faith is shaken by the appearance of any storm-cloud in the sky. But the Psalmist will not listen to his advisers, and we have therefore an expression of—

II. UNSHAKEN CONFIDENCE IN GOD. The first clause of the Psalm is re-echoed, and the grounds of it are asserted in the firmest manner (verse 4-7). There is no help for man, in man; but what then? There is help for man in God; and in God—in Jehovah, David will therefore put his trust. Consider—

1. *Jehovah's dwelling-place.* Above Jerusalem, now in a state of revolt; yea, above the whole earth in its agitated condition, is the holy temple of the Most High, even heaven itself, and there He is seated on His throne of majesty, from which He looks down upon the children of men. From so lofty an elevation He has power to do so, and none can escape the notice of His eye. He is the all-seeing One, and every creature is manifest in His sight. The world may be shaken; the pillars of human government may tremble; kings, and princes, and dynasties may totter to their fall; and the wildest anarchy may prevail in human society; but Jehovah reigns, and yonder, in His glorious palace of heaven, He dwells in serene majesty, watching over His people, and proving Himself their refuge and defence. It is not true, therefore, that the foundations are destroyed. They never can be. They are more stable than the granite rock, and will outlast the Andes and the Alps. The righteous have no real need to fear; for if they repair to Him who sitteth above the water-floods and reigneth King for ever, they will find a sure and certain hiding-place, and no weapon formed against them will prosper. And let the Christian believer bear in mind that it is Jehovah in the person of His Son whose throne is in the heavens. To that throne He was raised after His resurrection from the dead, and on that throne He now sits

as the God-Man and as the Head and Representative of His Church. Can the foundations then be destroyed, when He Himself is the foundation-stone, tried, elect, precious; and when all the interests of His Church are bound up and connected with His own? O poor, timid, believer, thou dost indeed require a place of safety, and flee thou must; but let it be to Him who is ever watching over thee, and caring for thee, and stretching out His arm that thou mayest take refuge there.

2. *Jehovah's treatment of the righteous and the wicked.* His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men. Jehovah trieth the righteous; but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth. "The mention of the eyelids," says Delitzsch, "is intentional. When we observe a thing closely, or ponder over it, we draw the eyelids together, in order that our vision may be more concentrated and direct, and become, as it were, one ray piercing through the object. Thus are men open to the all-seeing eyes, the all-searching looks of Jehovah; the just and the unjust alike." But the righteous He *tries*. He knows that there is something good in them; and, that it may shine forth with superior brightness, He puts them into the furnace, as He did His servant Job, who said, "But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, He will bring me forth as gold." Job xxiii. 10; Mal. iii. 2, 3; Heb. xii. 6, 7. In the furnace, however, He does not forsake them, but protects them, keeps them, and watches over them, until at length He sees that it is enough. Very differently does He deal with the wicked. His soul hates them in a high degree. There is nothing in them of which He can approve; and He has therefore ceased to try them as He tries the righteous, and thus they seem to be left alone in their wickedness. Is this an advantage, think you? On the contrary, it is one of the very worst of woes; and better is it to be tried to the very uttermost, as in a furnace heated seven times, than to be hated of God for persistent wickedness.

3. *Jehovah's punishment of the wicked.* Their prosperity is temporary and short-lived. Sooner or later He will rain upon them snares—fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup." They attempt to flee, but God takes them in gins or snares; and then, as on Sodom and Gomorrah, He rains upon them fire and brimstone, the allusion here being to the destruction of the cities of the plain. (Gen. xix.) That fearful judgment became the type of many others, (Isaiah xiii. 19; Jer. xlix. 18), and is the type of the last judgment that shall come upon a guilty world. (2 Peter ii. 6; Jude 6, 7; Rev. xx. 10.) The words rendered "a horrible tempest" signify rather "a burning wind," and refer to the simoon of the desert, before which all vegetation is scorched up,

and men find it impossible to breathe. All such language is figurative; but, that Divine judgments often alight on wicked men and wicked nations, it is impossible to deny; and whether the Psalmist had any reference to the last judgment or not, we know that such a judgment is in reserve for the finally impenitent: for the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. This shall be the portion of their cup, and they shall be compelled to drink it to the dregs.

4. *Jehovah's character and the believer's hope.* "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness," &c. He is the righteous One, and therefore He loves righteousness, loves it wherever He sees it—in the palace or in the cottage, in the prince or in the peasant, and will be sure in the end to reward it amply. God loves the beautiful in nature, and hence the variety of colours, tints, and hues with which He has adorned the flowers, and many species of birds, and numerous insects; but moral beauty is far more attractive to His sight than natural beauty, and one in whom holiness dwells is, to Him, an object of incomparable delight. If you would secure the approval of God, flee not to the mountain nor to any earthly refuge, but to Him alone; for then only will you act a righteous part, and then only will you do honour to His name. Because He loveth righteousness, He loveth those who trust in Him, and these He will defend from the attacks of every foe. The last clause should be rendered, "The upright shall behold His countenance." Job xix. 26. "To enjoy the vision of God, softened by love, is the highest honour God in His mercy can confer on a man—it is the blessedness itself that is reserved for the upright." Ps. cxl. 13. But did David refer to a vision of God in this life, or to the beatified vision of Him in the life to come? It is impossible to prove that the latter was not included in his hopes; and thus the redemption of the New Testament was anticipated, when the Redeemer "broke through the night of the realm of the dead," and bore on high with Him the Old Testament saints to a region of eternal love, where they behold in Him the countenance of God, and are waiting for the final end.

David, then, rejected the counsels of the time-servers, and on these grounds resolved that whatever might be his conflicts, he would put his trust in God. How noble his example! how worthy to be imitated by all!



Causes of the Low State of Religion in the Churches.

A SERMON BY REV. G. A. LINTZ, D.D., OF AMERICA.

“Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”—
MATT. xxiv. 12.

OUR blessed Saviour in this chapter speaks of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. He tells His disciples that it will be a time when the world will rise up against them; when all kinds of iniquity will prevail among men; and when the persecutions, temptations, and trials in the Church would induce many professed Christians to turn away from God, fall into the general current of iniquity, and either entirely apostatize from religion, or become cold and dead in their profession. He gives us a lamentable description of the state of the Church under the influence of the general corruption of the times. And this description of the Saviour is not only applicable to the time of which He speaks in connection with the words of the text, but to many of the subsequent periods in the history of the Church when she had fallen into the same state. The Church, notwithstanding her high and holy character and the zeal which she should always manifest in the service of her Master, is liable to fall into a low and languishing state. She is here in a world of sin and wickedness, exposed to temptations, and easily led astray. She is drawn away from God and brought into conformity with the world. She loses her holy character, her spiritual life, and becomes cold and dead. And when the Church is brought to this low and languishing condition, it becomes the duty of Christians to inquire into it, and see what are the causes which have produced this state of things, so that they may apply the necessary remedies, and save themselves and the Church from the ruin with which they are threatened. Let us, then, consider this subject; let us consider it seriously and solemnly; let us examine into our lives; let us search our hearts; for it must be acknowledged that there is cause for deep and thorough *heart-searching* in view of the low state of religion among us. Iniquity is abounding; sin is increasing; it is becoming bolder and waxing stronger every day; and while all this is going on Christians are becoming weaker, the love of many is waxing cold, the energies of the Church are so feeble, and the influence of Christians so little exerted, that they scarcely produce any effect.

What then are the causes of this low state of religion amongst us? this spiritual deadness in the Church? this inefficiency and want of zeal, this backsliding and falling away of Christians? I have heard some say, "We cannot always have a revival, there must be a time of coldness. God has withdrawn the influences of His Holy Spirit, and we cannot expect that religion should flourish among us now as it did when we had these influences." In this way, some people account for the low state of religion. They charge it upon God; they say it is because He has withheld the influence of His Holy Spirit. But is this not charging God foolishly? Is it not charging Him with an unwillingness to give His Holy Spirit? And is this true? Is He not willing to give His Holy Spirit, and more willing to give than we are to ask? God is always ready and willing to pour out His Holy Spirit, and the low state of religion is not owing to indisposition on His part to grant that influence which is so necessary to support and preserve spiritual religion in the heart. It is owing to the indisposition of Christians to receive that spiritual and Divine influence which God is ready to impart to them. *They do not ask for it.* They do not pray for it as they might, they do not feel the necessity and importance of such an influence. They are not in a situation to receive it, and consequently they cannot enjoy it. Religion languishes and dies in their hearts. God is always ready to work, but He works by means. It is His will and design that His people should work with Him, that they should pray, and labour, and render sacrifices, that His work may go on. And when the professed people of God are unwilling to work in this way, when they grow weary and faint, and turn away from the Lord unto their idols, when they restrain prayer, when they leave the work which the Lord has given them to do in his vineyard, and follow after the world and its vanities and forbidden pleasures, the work of the Lord will cease. The windows of heaven will be shut up, and the Holy Spirit will no longer descend to refresh and enliven and animate the hearts of Christians. They will lose their interest in religion, and they will pine away and die in their sins. In this way God withholdeth His Holy Spirit, and suffers religion to decline in the hearts of His professing people. He suffers them to go on in their sins, and pursue their own evil ways. In this way an entire church is sometimes given up to the spirit of delusion. Whole congregations and communities are ready to perish under this awful judgment of God for their sins; and yet they do not seem to be sensible of their danger. O that God might open the eyes of His backslidden people, and show them wherein they have sinned against Him!

Another cause of the low state of religion in the Church is

the carelessness of so many professing Christians in reading the Bible, and meditating on Divine truth. Go into many of our Christian families, and you will find the tables covered with books, and pamphlets, and works of fancy, designed for their entertainment and improvement. These books are eagerly sought after, read in the family, and provided for the entertainment of visitors, when the Bible is neglected and its sacred truths kept out of view. The Bible is the great means which God has given for preserving and promoting spiritual religion in families and in the Church. For this purpose it should occupy the chief place in every family. It should be faithfully read and studied every day. Christ says, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." The Bereans were commended because "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so;" therefore many of them believed. And this is every Christian's duty. He must search the Scriptures; he must read his Bible every day—read it seriously, prayerfully, so that he may derive instruction and benefit from it. If he neglects this, he neglects the very means which God has given him for his improvement in religion. If he neglects his Bible, he will soon lose his interest in religion. He cannot go forward in the work. The Psalmist says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path;" and if we have not this lamp, we shall soon be left in the dark, and lose our way. It is this that causes so many professing Christians to stumble and fall in the Church; and it is in consequence of this that the Church has so often reason to mourn over the low state of religion—the errors and offences—the wanderings and backslidings of so many of her members.

When people do not *read* the word of God, they have no desire to hear it *preached*. They neglect the public worship of God in the sanctuary, absent themselves from the ordinances, and feel no interest in the religious meetings of their brethren for their spiritual improvement. This is usually the case with persons who neglect the Scriptures and the worship of God at home. They feel no interest in the public worship of God, and when they attend religious meetings, it seems more from constraint than from a willingness to be benefited and improved. This is also a cause of a low state of religion in many of our churches.

The next cause of the low state of religion among us which I would mention, is *the want of brotherly faithfulness in members of the church towards each other*. Christians should take a deep interest in each other's spiritual welfare. They are bound together by the most sacred ties. They should love each other

as brethren, as members of the same spiritual family. They should always be united in the closest harmony and friendship; and when differences occur among them, they should immediately seek to become reconciled upon the principles laid down in the Gospel of Christ. Matt. xviii. 15-17. They should never indulge in any unkind and bitter feeling. They should never think of publishing each other's faults among men, or resorting to the world for the settlement of their difficulties. 1 Cor. vi. 1-7. For whenever they do so, they go out of the way prescribed in the Gospel; they violate the law and commandment of Christ; and they bring dishonour on the Christian profession. All differences among Christians should be settled upon Christian principles; upon the principles asserted by the apostle that the saints shall judge the world; that Christians are the most proper persons to judge between their brethren, and that we should rather suffer wrong than to contend before the world, and cause the wicked to blaspheme. This is the *spirit* in which all differences among Christians should be settled; and it is because there are so many professing Christians who are unwilling to be governed and directed by this spirit; so prone to indulge their selfish feelings; so unwilling to receive Christian counsel and advice; and so determined to have their own way, that religion suffers, and the cause of God languishes in so many Christian communities. Christians should feel such a deep interest in each other's welfare; they should have such a love and regard for each other, as faithfully to observe each other's conduct; and when they see anything that is wrong, anything hurtful to the soul of an individual, or injurious to the cause of religion, they should admonish one another, for God has commanded the Christian, "Thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." We should honestly and faithfully admonish and reprove one another for the errors and offences which we commit; and it is the want of this faithfulness among professing Christians; this want of interest in the welfare of our brethren; this proneness to selfishness, an unforgiving desposition, and worldly temper in the church, which has done more injury to religion than all other causes combined.

Such are the causes of the low state of religion. These causes exist among us. We see their sad effects, and feel their deleterious influence. We see how iniquity abounds, and the love of many is waxing cold; how the ways of Zion mourn, and how few come to its solemn feasts; how Christians forsake the assembling of themselves together, and how they are neglecting their Christian duties, falling from their stedfastness, and giving themselves away to a worldly spirit. We see how the cause of God is languishing in our midst, how religion is diminishing in

our own hearts, how we are carried away by the spirit of the times. The reason is, we do not pray as Christians *ought* to pray, especially at such a time as this. We do not call upon the name of the Lord with that earnestness and perseverance which are required. We do not agonise in prayer; we do not lay hold of the horns of the altar, and cry mightily to God, and wrestle with Him as His servants did who prevailed. We do not read the Scriptures, and hear the Word of God, and love and meditate upon it, as we ought to do. We are not faithful enough to each other as Christian brethren. We fall into sin, and backslide, and bring reproach upon the cause of Christ; and we suffer each other to go on without labouring with each other, and admonishing and reproving one another, as it is our solemn duty to do.

And now, in view of these causes, how ought we to *feel*, and what ought we to *do*? I answer—

1. In view of the low state of religion among us, and the causes which led to it, *we ought to feel deeply humbled*. It is not a light matter which should pass over with a confession of sin, such as we are accustomed to make, and then think we have done all we can do, and is our duty to do. No, we have arrived at a crisis in the Church which should awaken deep feeling in every heart; we have turned away from God; we have grievously backslidden; we have fallen into open sins, which have brought dishonour on religion, opened the mouths of gainsayers, and made us a reproach and by-word before the world. And now God is ready to come out in judgment against us. He is already chastening us with His sore displeasure. It would almost seem that His Spirit had departed from us, and that He had given us up as a prey to the enemy. Difficulties and trials are coming upon us from every quarter, and roots of bitterness are springing up to trouble us in every direction; and if the Lord do not stretch forth His hand and save us, we must eventually perish. Such is our state. O that we might all realise it! O that every member of the Church might *see* and *feel* the awful crisis we have reached! We would then feel like Nehemiah when he said, "Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my father's sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" Like Esther, the queen, when she fasted and prayed for the deliverance of her people, and entered into the presence of the king and sought relief. Like the priests and ministers of God, who wept between the porch and the altar, and cried, "Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." Such should be our emotions and feelings in view of the present state of religion among us. And the reason

why we do not experience these emotions and feelings is, that we are so blinded by sin that we cannot see our danger. And is it not to be feared that some of us are past all feeling, that we have hearts like the nether millstone, that our eyes are closed that we cannot see, and that God has sent us strong delusions that we might go on and perish, as a judicial affliction upon us for our sins?

2. Christians should unite in faithful and judicious efforts for the reviving influences of the Holy Spirit. They should come together and consider the low state of religion, they should inquire into the causes, and make it a subject of special prayer, that they might be awakened to a just sense of their duties and responsibilities in this matter, they should feel that they are the cause of the spiritual deadness in the Church, of the neglect and indifference and contempt with which religion is treated around them. They should feel that they are to blame in this matter, and that upon them rests the responsibility of continuing in this awful and perilous condition. Such a feeling in the Church usually leads to a blessed result, it brings down the Holy Spirit; and we cannot hope for the descent of the Holy Spirit until the Church begins to wake up and feel the weight of her responsibilities and duties. This is the great thing now needed among professing Christians. They must look at the state of religion, they must see how deplorable it is, they must feel to mourn over it, and then they must look into their own hearts, and see how, by their neglect of Christian duties, their worldly conformity, their backslidings and sins, they have contributed to this state, and how very guilty they are in the sight of God. They must confess their sins, and humble themselves before God, and repent in dust and ashes. They must call upon the Lord, pray for the Holy Spirit, and God will yet have mercy on them, and hearken to their cry, and send them relief.

3. Christians, in view of the low state of religion, should commence the work of reformation in their own families. We are apt to look for great things abroad when we should look for them at home. If we wish to have a revival in the Church, we must begin in the family. If there are any obstacles in our families or in our own hearts, they must first be removed before we can hope to see a work of grace commence in our midst. We must prepare our families and our hearts, and then we shall see it go on; and if every Christian did so, if he opened the way for the Holy Spirit in his family and his heart, how soon would we have a revival of religion. This is what hinders the Holy Spirit from coming in our midst; we look for Him abroad, but we do not pray, we do not look for

Him in our families and in our own hearts; and until we begin here, we cannot hope that God will hear our prayers and prosper our labours.

4. *Christians should pray for a revival of religion as the most necessary and important matter that can possibly engage their attention.* They should pray with one accord, with united hearts; they should assemble themselves together for this purpose; they should lay aside every other business, and attend to this; they should feel this is the first and most necessary business to be attended to, and that the time spent in this business is most pleasing to God and profitable to their souls. They should realise, without a revival of religion the times are constantly growing worse, iniquity is abounding, the love of Christians is waxing colder, sinners are growing bolder in sin, God's wrath is waxing hotter against us, and the danger is constantly increasing that we shall be consumed by that wrath. Such is our situation, and such the crisis to which we have arrived, that the only thing that can save the Church, and the country, and our families from impending destruction, is *a revival of religion*. God is our only refuge from the storm that is ready to burst upon us. To Him let us flee. He alone, by His almighty arm and the influence of His Spirit, can save us. Then let us ask this influence. Let us ask God to pour out His Holy Spirit upon our churches, and our families, and our hearts. Let us pray that He may revive and refresh us by a shower of His grace. This is what we need, a revival of religion; and we need the *spirit of prayer to obtain it*. We need the spirit of the patriarch who wrestled with God, and said, "I cannot let Thee go, except Thou give me a blessing." We need the spirit of the prophet who entreated for Zion, and said, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

God alone can revive us, and He will revive us if we do our duty, and use the means He has appointed for this purpose. Though we have deserved that He should leave us to perish in our sins; though He is a Sovereign, and under no obligation to save us, even if we should use the means, yet He has promised that He will have mercy upon us if we turn from our sins with penitent and broken hearts. He hath said in His Word, "Return unto me, ye backsliding children, and I will heal all your backslidings." What a kind invitation! What a precious promise! O, let us accept this invitation! Let us lay hold of this promise, and let us say, "Behold, we come unto Thee, for Thou art the Lord our God."

God can bring deliverance to His people. He can raise His

Church out of her low state ; He can turn the waste and desolate places into blooming fields ; He can bring order out of confusion, light out of darkness, and can even so control and overrule sin and wickedness when they have arrived at their highest pitch, so as to promote His purposes and glory. All this the Lord can do. But for this He will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them. This is the condition. If we want the power of God to be manifested in our deliverance and salvation and the accomplishment of His blessed purposes, we must ask for it. O, then, let us ask for a manifestation of His power and grace in our midst ! Let us ask for the Holy Spirit with humble, believing, persevering prayer ; and then we may expect a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.



Materials for Sermons.

XXI.—LIFE AND DEATH: A CONTRAST.

“Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death. He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence : but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey. For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the Lord : it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.”—JER. xxi. 8-10.

THESE words were spoken by Jeremiah to the Jews, when the Chaldeans were drawing near to besiege Jerusalem. Those who remained in the city should find the way of death ; whilst those who left the city and fell to the Chaldeans should be in the way of life.

Our text has certain figures in it, and is therefore calculated to impress our minds with certain important things. The terms “way of life” and “way of death” convey the idea of a journey. And truly this is the case ; for we are all travellers to eternity. There are only two ways to eternity. The Gospel sets before us these two ways. The reception of Christ in faith is the way of life, the rejection of Christ in unbelief is the way of death. Mark xvi. 16. Take heed to your steps. Observe the way. “Behold, I set before you the way of life,” &c.

I. THE CHOICE DEMANDED: “Behold,” &c.

You cannot walk in both ways; for no man can serve two masters—"God and mammon." There is set before you—

1. "*The way of life.*" The way of life denotes not merely the way of spiritual life, but of eternal or everlasting life.

This way is Christ. John xiv. 6. It is a pleasant way. Prov. iii. 17. It is the way of life. 1 John v. 20; John xvii. 3. Eternal life is in Christ, and flows eternally from Him. John iii. 16. There is set before you—

2. "*The way of death.*" The opposite of the way of life. The term "*way*" denotes the rebellion of the ungodly against God, adding "iniquity unto iniquity." The way to death. The term "*death*" as it is used in relation to the wicked denotes their everlasting punishment in hell. Matt. vii. 13. Here are found fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, drunkards, thieves, covetous, extortioners," &c. Here are found some of you. You hope to go to heaven, but walk in the way to hell. O, folly of follies! Eph. v. 14.

3. *The attention required:* "Behold!" As if the Holy Ghost would have you take special notice. Behold the way of life and the way of death! Mark the difference! See the contrast! Life and death. You can have one of two things, not both. Life or death. Which? Let us notice—

II. THE GREAT CONTRAST.

1. *They who remain in the way of death shall perish.* "He that abideth in this city shall die," &c. This was literally fulfilled. Many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem concealed themselves from the enemy. Some were found and put to death by the sword; for there was no compassion on young man or maiden, old man or him that stooped for age. Others who succeeded in escaping the sword were overtaken by famine, and those who escaped the famine, having a supply of food, the pestilence reached, so that all who remained in the city died.

Those who abide in the city of destruction shall die—die eternally. Sinners sin in a diversity of forms. "They turn every one his to own way;" and though they try to conceal themselves, they will be overtaken by the wrath of God. Ps. ix. 17; Luke xiii. 3, 5. Sinner, leave the city of destruction, and flee to Christ. Abide no longer, lest you perish!

2. *All who travel in the way of life shall be saved:* "He

that goeth out," &c. Many were carried into captivity, where they and their posterity remained until the overthrow of the Babylonian empire by Cyrus, who caused a decree to be promulgated throughout the empire, announcing that all the people of God were free to return to Jerusalem, and rebuild the temple. Only a few returned. Some of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and a few of the ten tribes, in all amounting to upwards of 50,000, set out under Zerrubbabel, and arrived in Judæa after a journey of four months.

Those who leave the city of destruction and surrender themselves to God shall live. "They shall not die, but live." Their bodies must die, but their souls shall live. They shall live spiritually in union with the Son and in communion with the Father by the Holy Ghost. They have a personal and vital acquaintance with God; knew Him as He is known in Christ and by the Holy Spirit. They shall live in heaven for ever, forming one vast multitude in the city of the living God. God will manifest Himself to them in a peculiar manner. They will drink of the "water of life," and eat of the "tree of life." Rev. xxi. 4. Let us pass on to notice—

III. THE SOLEMN DECLARATION. The Lord declares—

1. *His displeasure with Jerusalem*: "I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good." Jerusalem was soon invaded and overcome by the enemy. Sinners are under the frown of God. His face is against them; for He is "angry with the wicked every day." As the inhabitants of Jerusalem could save themselves by going over to the Chaldeans, so sinners may save themselves by coming to Christ. Those who continue in sin perish, while those who forsake their sins live. The Lord declares—

2. *The manner in which His displeasure should be manifested against Jerusalem.*

He says—(1.) "It shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon." This was fulfilled 416 years after the inauguration of Solomon's temple, and 588 B.C. The king of Babylon despoiled its treasures, and carried many of its best inhabitants into captivity. The wicked will be given into the hand of the great adversary. The ministers of Divine vengeance will take them away to eternal woe. Prov. xiv. 32. The Lord says—(2.) "He shall burn it with fire." So it was; Zedekiah, who had

been placed on the throne by the king of Babylon, revolted. The king, exasperated at his faithlessness, again besieged the city, and Zedekiah was taken prisoner. Soon after, Nebuzar-adan with his Royal guard entered Jerusalem, with the king's orders to pillage and burn the temple, and level the city to the ground. He accordingly stripped the temple of everything valuable, and on the third day after his entrance, which was the Sabbath-day, set fire to the temple and to Jerusalem. The whole city was reduced to a heap of ruins. Its walls were razed to their foundation, and its buildings were burned to the ground. All who remain in sin will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. "He that believeth not shall be damned."

In conclusion—

1. Will you like fools expose yourselves to the wrath of God. Everyone while on earth may be saved.

2. Let all who are living in sin consider the greatness of their folly. Angels in heaven and devils in hell wonder at your folly.

3. Let us praise God because we are in the reach of mercy. We deserve hell, but we are out of it. Praise the Lord!

4. Let all seek to be saved by faith in Christ. We may all be saved. The way to the Cross is short and easy. Repent and believe. We may claim all the merits of Christ's atoning sacrifice. Through Christ's atoning sacrifice God will receive us, forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Believe now. Leave your burden, and you are free—saved through the blood of the Lamb.

J. B. HORBERRY.

Brighton.

XXII.—ACCEPTED OF GOD.

"To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved."—Eph. i. 6.

I. WE ARE ACCEPTED OF GOD. This implies on our part a return unto Him in (1) repentance, (2) faith, (3) presentation. On God's part it implies—(1) Forgiveness of sin, (2) reconciliation, (3) adoption, (4) love, (5) assurance.

II. We are accepted of God in GRACE. There was nothing in us to recommend us to Him; to demand acceptance; to merit acceptance: nothing in the law to effect this acceptance. It is simply, purely, absolutely of grace; free, infinite, almighty grace.

III. We are accepted of God also IN THE BELOVED. Jesus is the Beloved of God the Father—(1) As His Son, (2) He is beloved of angels, (3) Beloved of saints. Accepted by grace in Him as the Saviour, the Mediator. We are in Him as purchased by His blood, as cleansed by His blood, as reconciled by His blood. All the grace of the infinite Father could not have accepted us without the Beloved. We are in Him, therefore we are accepted in grace. Grace is the first great cause of salvation in the Beloved. If there had been no grace, there would have been no salvation; equally true is it without the Beloved there would have been no salvation.

IV. THE GREAT END DESIGNED in our acceptance of God in the Beloved:—"To the praise of the glory of His grace:" to exhibit and magnify the glory of His grace. The glory of God's grace is seen in (1) its freeness, (2) in its plenitude, (3) in its universality, (4) in its all-sufficiency, (5) in its unfailing endurance. To exhibit this grace God accepts us. Not for our name's sake, but for His name's sake, hath He saved us.

V. The emotion which should be excited within us, to praise the glory of His grace. Not to be selfish and keep the happiness to ourselves; not to keep the good in our own bosom, but sing His praise, speak His praise, live His praise. *

XXIII.—ESTIMATES OF LIFE.

"For what is your life."—JAMES iv. 14.

I. WHAT is your life in its *duration*? It is short, very short. Vapour, shadow, &c.

II. What is your life in its *security*? Uncertain, any moment you may die &c.

III. In its *object*? To serve your day and generation according to the will of God.

IV. In its *influence upon yourself*? Does it make you serious—industrious? &c.

V. In its *responsibilities*? Everything you have to do with gives responsibility.

VI. What is your life? or, rather, what will it be in its results? Solemn question. Ponder well. Heaven or hell.—*Rev. Tryon Edwards.*

Illustrations, &c.

LIFE AS A TENT.—It was in the bleak season of a cold autumn, by the side of a large moor, that I one day saw a shepherd's

tent. It was composed of straw and fern, and secured under the warmer side of a hedge, with a few briars and stakes. Thither, for about a week, he took shelter, until the herbage failed his flock, and he removed I knew not whither. His tent was, however, left behind. A few days after, I rode that way, and looked for the shepherd's tent, but it was all gone. The stormy winds had scattered its frail materials, and only a few fragments strewed the ground to mark out that once, for a brief day, the tent had its residence, and the shepherd his solace there. And such is this life, and such are all the airy expectations, and imaginary felicities, and hoped-for ports and palaces beneath the sun. Times scatters them, as the storm did the fern and straw of the shepherd's tent.—*R. Marks.*

LIFE AS A RIVER.—Life bears us on like a stream of a mighty river. Our boat at first glides down the narrow channel—through the playful murmuring of the little brook and the winding of its grassy borders. The trees shed their blossoms over young heads, the flowers on the brink seem to offer themselves to the young hands: we are happy in hope, and we grasp eagerly at the beauties around us—but the stream hurries on, and still our hands are empty. Our course in youth and manhood is along a wilder and deeper flood, amid objects more striking and magnificent. We are animated at the moving pictures and enjoyments and industry passing us; we are excited at some short-lived disappointment. The stream bears us on, and our joys and griefs are alike left behind us. We may be shipwrecked, but we cannot be delayed; whether rough or smooth the river hastens to its home, till the roar of the ocean is in our ears, and the tossing of the waves is beneath our feet, and the land lessens from our eyes, and the floods are lifted up around us, and we take our leave of earth and its inhabitants, until of our future voyage there is no witness save the Infinite and Eternal.—*Bp. Heber.*

“ We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs.

He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.”

Divisions of Texts.

REASONS FOR NOT LIVING ALWAYS.

"I would not live alway."—JOB vii. 16.

REASONS why the good man or Christian would not live always:—

1. Because he prefers perfect light to comparative darkness.
 2. Immaculate purity to partial sanctification.
 3. Immortal strength to earthly weakness.
 4. Cloudless serenity to agitating storms.
 5. The fellowship of the glorified to the society of the human.
 6. The honours of victory to the perils of warfare.
- Dr. Sprague.*

NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL.

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."—ROM. i. 16.

THE believer has no cause to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

- I. He has no cause to be ashamed of *its Author*.
- II. Of the *testimony on which the truth of the Gospel rests*.
- III. Of the *means by which the Gospel is promulgated*.
- IV. Of the *adaptation of the Gospel to the wants of mankind*.
- V. He has no reason to be ashamed of the Gospel, because in the salvation which it offers *the power of God is especially manifested*.
- VI. Because the Gospel *eminently illustrates the holiness of God*.
- VII. He has no cause to be ashamed of *the effects which the Gospel has already produced*.
- VIII. No reason to be ashamed of the Gospel if we consider what will be its final results.—*Rev. G. B. Ide.*

OUR EYES UPON GOD.

"Neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee."—2 CHRON. xx. 12.

Introduction. Show the circumstances in which Jehoshaphat and his people were placed, that led to the utterance of the text. The subject of the text is, the circumstances in which God's people are placed, in which they know not what to do in the use of human means to help them. They see no way of escape, and all they can do is to look to the Lord for His counsel and help. "Our eyes are upon Thee, and if Thou dost not interfere, there is no deliverance for us." "Stand still, and see the salvation of God."

- I. There are such times in the *business*.
- II. In the *family*.
- III. In the *church*.
- IV. In the *nation*.
- V. In the *religious life*.

There is, however, deliverance for us as for the king of Israel. If we wait, praise, and trust, the Lord will work for us and save us. See context.

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Open-air Services.

THE DAY OF SALVATION.

"Behold, now is the day of salvation."—2 Cor. vi. 2.

OUR text speaks of salvation. *All men need salvation, for all are by nature exposed to eternal ruin, and that on account of sin.* There is not that snow-white purity among men that God should pass them by as innocent, for Scripture says, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Say not, O man, thy thoughts are pure, for the heart of man is a "treasury of evil." The natural man is "carnal," "blind," "proud," and "perverse." Unless thou hast the grace of God in thy heart, and canst truly say thy sins are forgiven thee, thou art still in the "gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." Does a house on fire need the aid of a fire escape-man in order to rescue the lives of the inmates? So do a world of sinners need the help of one "mighty to save," so that they perish not from His sight when His wrath is kindled but a little. Look out yonder at that disabled ship at sea! Behold the signal of distress how it calls for help! "Man the lifeboat!" "Man the lifeboat!" is the cry all around; and is it not a true picture of the world at large? We have all taken a voyage in a leaky ship; our sins have launched us out upon an ocean of peril; our frail bark has driven us many a time upon the rocks and quicksands; yet still there is hope, for if it is needful to send a boat out to rescue a drowning crew from a watery grave, it is much more so for an Almighty arm to save a perishing world.

There is a salvation provided for all men. We read of an Egyptian bondage, and of how God raised up Moses, a man after His own heart, to deliver the captive people. The Lord worked wonders for Israel. We read also of a spiritual bondage, and of how God raised up a Deliverer in the person of His only begotten

Son, whom He sent into the world to die an ignominious death upon the cross, in order to set the captive free.

"To mount the cross He left the realms of bliss;
Was ever woe, was ever love like this?"

Immediately Adam received the penalty of his transgression, the Lord gave him the promise, "that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head," referring to Jesus Christ, who destroyed the works of Satan by dying on the cross.

Sinner, there is salvation for thee. It does not matter how great a sinner you are: though your sins be of a "scarlet" and "crimson" character, yet there is salvation full and free for such as thou art. Christ died for all. The floodgates of salvation were opened by the death of Christ, and the stream has been flowing onward ever since. To arrest its progress false prophets have tried to corrupt the followers of the Lamb by introducing into the worship of the sanctuary false ceremonies and idolatry. To quench the zeal of the saints persecution has done its wretched part. But the Gospel is still the same as ever, it is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."

Now is the day of salvation.

The Sun of Righteousness has now arisen with healing in His wings. Behold its powerful rays! The night of despair has yielded to the day of hope. The flag of victory is now floating mast high. There is "life for a look" now. Not only can the "hem of His garment be touched, but, sinner, you can *have* Christ as yours; He is "ready and willing" to save you now.

"Delay not till to-morrow to be wise:
To-morrow's sun may never rise."

Remember the five foolish virgins in the parable.

Illustrations.

A traveller deferred to supply a nail, and lost his horse's shoe; he delayed to supply the shoe, and his horse became lame; he deferred to regard its lameness—the horse stumbled and the traveller was killed.

Absalom delayed to follow David, according to the treacherous advice of Ahithophel, and instead of crushing his rival was himself defeated, and slain by Joab in the woods of Ephraim. 2 Sam. xv. 17, 18.

"Procrastination is the thief of time,
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
And to the mercies of a moment leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene."

JOHN ROBERTS.

Thoughts about Jesus.

BY A PREACHER.

WHEN the rich ruler came running after Jesus, and kneeling before Him, asking Him what he must do to inherit eternal life, the bystanders said nothing to him : but soon after, when poor blind Bartimæus called after Jesus, the multitude commanded him to hold his peace. Thus it is, the world favours the rich, but frowns upon the poor ; one it allows to do as it likes, the other it would keep in silence and poverty. Not so with Jesus. He heard, He blest, He received the poor blind man, while the rich man He sent empty away, requiring him to sell all that he had, and come, as the poor man, empty, and He would send him away full.

WHAT the sun is to the natural world, giving light, life, warmth, beauty, glory to every land and people, Jesus is to the spiritual world. He is the Sun of righteousness to the guilty, the Sun of glory to the debased, the Sun of health to the diseased, the Sun of light to the benighted, the Sun of comfort to the sorrowful, the Sun of life to the dead.

“Where He displays His healing wings,
Sin and the curse are known no more;
In Him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost.”

THE Scribes and Pharisees rejected Jesus because of the pride of their self-righteousness. They considered themselves quite as good or better than He was or than He could make them. The publicans, and harlots, and malefactors received Jesus because of their conscious sinfulness and emptiness. They saw by faith that He contained all they needed. Jesus became to them a Saviour, but to the others a Judge.

It is not our depravity in its original or practical condition that keeps us back from Jesus. This renders us the fit subjects of His mercy and grace. This is the very thing for which He is a Saviour. It is our self-willedness, unbelief, a sense of moral goodness which we have. We will not go to Him because we think we have no need of Him. And He cannot save us upon the principle included in the proverb, The whole have no need of a physician.

THOSE wicked Jews little thought that when they were treating

Jesus with such mock royalty, that their very mockery in its several acts symbolized glorious truths, which belonged to Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. Their crown of thorns serves to remind us of His crown of glory. Their sceptre of reed reminds of His sceptre of righteousness. Their knee-bowing reminds of angels and saints worshipping, &c., &c.

As all the Book of creation testifies of God as the Creator, some more, some less; so all the Book of the Scriptures testify of Jesus as the Saviour, some more, some less. And as the Deist searches the one for his God, so the Christian should search the other for his Saviour. "Search the Scriptures," said Jesus, "they are they that testify of Me."

WE may say of Jesus, after the lapse of eighteen hundred years, with all the great apostles, philosophers, and teachers included therein, as the officers said of Him, "Never man spake like this Man." To the end of the world He will never have an equal. Through all time and through all eternity He will stand forth the pre-eminent Teacher.

THREE circumstances of an unearthly nature took place at the baptism of Jesus. First, the heaven opened, to show its entire approval of Him as Messiah. Secondly, the Spirit in the form of a dove, to indicate His simplicity, innocence, and wisdom, came upon Him to anoint Him for His mission. Thirdly, the Eternal Father declared that Jesus was His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased.

Pulpit Illustrations.

KEEPING THE HEART.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."
—PROVERBS iv. 23.

THE heart is a *lamp*, which the High and Holy One has entrusted to our care: keep it well trimmed, then, keep it with all diligence; let it not resemble those of the foolish virgins, who took no oil with them; but rather look unto God for fresh supplies of His grace, that you be not terrified at the midnight cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him."

The heart is a *ship*; keep it with all diligence. Look to the hull and the rudder, the masts, the sails, and the rigging. Have an eye to the crew, and take especial care what merchandise you put aboard; mind that you have plenty of ballast, and that you carry not too much sail. Mind you have a heavenly Pilot at the helm. Be prepared for storms, for you will have them, whether you are prepared for them or not. Encourage the hope of a fair voyage, and a happy arrival at the heavenly haven.

The heart is a *temple*. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" Have a care that you keep it with all diligence! keep it pure and undefiled. Let the ark of the covenant be found within it. Let your prayers be set forth as incense, and the lifting up of your hands as the evening sacrifice. Let your offerings be without spot or blemish, remembering that "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," and that "a broken and a contrite heart He will not despise." Dedicate the temple of your hearts to the Lord of lords and King of kings, and use all diligence in seeking that it may be filled with His glory.

The heart is a *besieged city*, and liable to attacks on all sides. Go round about it; tell the towers thereof, and mark well the bulwarks; while you defend one part, keep a good look-out on the other; while you build up the bastion here, let not the gateway be left defenceless there. Shells may be thrown over the walls, and sappers may mine a way under them. Be alive! be diligent! post your sentinels! have a watchword! take care whom you let in, and whom you allow to go out. Muster your troops, and see that there be no traitors among them. You have plenty to do, and plenty to attend to; keep, then, your heart with all diligence.—*Old Humphrey*.

DIVINE GUIDANCE.

"Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory."—PSALM lxxiii. 24.

On the coast of Norway there is a fearful whirlpool, known as the Maelstrom, which, at certain stages of the tide, rages with terrible violence, and sweeps into its vortex the vessels which approach it unwarily. For many years it was supposed that it was impossible to pilot a ship safely across this whirlpool, but skilful pilots now, at certain conditions of the tide, make the passage with safety. To the voyager unused to its dangers,

however, the passage, though under the guidance of the most accomplished helmsman, seems full of horrors ; on one side yawns the dark abyss, toward which the circling tide seems hurrying him ; before and on either side are huge black rocks, against which the waves break with fearful violence, and the contact with which would hurl his ship to swift destruction ; around him, too, the waves rush madly, while the vessel, careering by the force of the current, seems ready to plunge headlong downward ; if now the pilot's grasp upon the helm relaxes, or the ship yields not instantly to it, death is inevitable. But while he gazes thus, almost transfixed with terror, the waters suddenly grow smooth, the roaring of the waves ceases, and the vessel, righting itself imperceptibly, glides out upon the smooth, unruffled sea.

So is it in the affairs of our mortal life. There are times when we seem ready to go down into the depths of woe and anguish, when before us is the abyss ready to swallow us up, and around us on every hand obstacles oppose our progress and threaten us with destruction. Our souls are almost palsied with affright, for it seems as if the very next moment we might be ruined for time, and, perhaps, for eternity. All the precious freight of hopes we have so long borne in our bosoms now burdens our spirits, and, almost in despair, we exclaim, How shall we escape from these impending dangers ? Who shall guide us amid such perils ? Fear not, saints of God, thy Father is at the helm. He knows every obstacle, every danger. His eye never grows dim, His hand never falters, and the winds and the sea obey Him. Even while thou art gazing in terror on the dangers around thee, His hand shall guide thee to the still waters—and, spanning the gulf thou hast dreaded, thou shalt behold the bow of the covenant, the token of the fulfilment of His promises.

THE WORD HID IN THE HEART.

“Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee.”
—PSALM cxix. 11.

A ROMISH priest in Ireland met a boy coming from a school with a Bible in his hand.

“Do you go to that place ?” said the priest, pointing to the Protestant schol.

"Yes, your reverence," replied the boy.

"I thought so," replied the priest, "by the book you have in your hand. It is a bad book; give it to me."

"That is God's Word," said the boy, "and it teaches us the way to love God, to be good, and to get to heaven when we die."

"Come home with me," said the priest.

The boy did so; and the priest took the poor boy's Bible and threw it on the fire.

"You shall never read that book again," said the priest; "it is a bad book; and mind, I shall not suffer you to go to that school again."

The Bible was soon in flames, and the boy at first looked very sad; but as the priest grew more and more angry, and told him there was an end of it now, the boy began to smile.

"Why do you laugh?" asked the priest.

"I can't help it," said the boy.

"I insist upon you telling me why you laugh," said the priest.

"I can't help laughing," replied the boy, "for I was thinking your reverence couldn't burn those ten chapters I've got by heart."

IT CANNOT BE BURNED.

"HAVE you anything like this in the old country?" asked a young American of me one day, in the wonderful city of Chicago, as he pointed to a handsome warehouse built of stone. "This, sir, is fire-proof; it cannot be burned. There is not a bit of timber about it which is not covered with zinc, and if other buildings around here were destroyed, this would be safe."

His eye sparkled as he told me of the various means used to make it resist the power of fire, and he firmly believed what he said was true. But Chicago was ashes. Many of its boasted fire-proof buildings have perished, and persons who took refuge from the flames in them were burned to death.

Reader! have you made any provision against the awful calamity that very soon shall sweep over this guilty world? Are you trusting your soul's salvation to anything, or anyone, except Christ and the great salvation which He accomplished for sinners on Calvary's cross? Human devices for salvation may

look well now, and promise great things in the future, but when "the day cometh that shall burn as an oven" (Malachi iv. 1), when God's hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies (Isaiah xxviii. 17), they shall all fail, and those who have trusted in them shall perish. Nothing shall stand the searching fire of God's judgment in that day, but the refuge which God Himself has provided, as a shelter in the coming day of wrath.

THE MORAL EXCELLENCE OF JESUS.

THE world never saw but one character in whom all the varieties of intellectual and moral greatness centred; blending in that Divine and ravishing harmony which may be termed the music of the soul. There never was but one who reconciled the extremes of universal excellence, in whom the vastest intellect and the tenderest sensibility, the calmest judgment and the keenest feelings, co-existed without disturbing one another; in whom magnanimity was not tinctured with pride; in whom humility was never meanness, whose charity was never consumed by the fierce fire of zeal, nor an honest zeal damped by the excess of charity, whose pity for the wretched never mitigated abhorrence of vice, nor the sternest regard for the majesty of truth diminished the most touching compassion for human frailty; in a word, in whom greatness and lowliness, courage and fortitude, zeal and patience, incorruptible truth and more than human gentleness, and a thousand opposing virtues more, were Divinely blended, uniting the various rays of moral excellence in one glorious emanation of wisdom and love. That character was Jesus Christ, in whom dwelt, indeed, all the fulness of the Godhead, and whose humanity was but a veil through which streamed in soft radiance the otherwise insufferable effulgence of Deity. Any merely human character approximates towards perfection just as he approaches or recedes from this great Example; and by it we may safely take the measurement or proportion of any given specimen of human excellence.—*Jonathan Edwards.*

THE CHASE OF THE LOST.

SOME years ago, a visitor at an insane asylum observed a woman passing to and fro in a long passage. As she would reach the

wall at either end, she would look eagerly for an object of which she appeared to be in search, and then, failing to find it, she would wring her hands, and moaning piteously, commence again the round. So it was that she passed each day and night, except during a few hours of exhaustion, when in her dreams the same sad search was kept up. She was a mother who had lost her child, and then, in her grief, had become deranged.

Such may be part of the eternal punishment of those who fix their hearts upon merely temporal pleasures. Let us take the love of money. Gold is hunted and gloated over, so that the lust of it becomes a controlling passion. But then comes the grave. *There are no pockets in the shroud.* Those who come after are eager enough to seize the wealth of him that goes. See the scene by his death-bed. The words he mutters are about his money. When his mind is recalled, and his lips are aroused from their torpor sufficiently to articulate, we find that it is in the eager hunt for money that he is still engaged. As the tree falls so it lies. The consuming passion of time will be the consuming passion for eternity. But there is this difference—in time there is an object to be seized. There may be a maniac pursuit, but there is also a maniac enjoyment. But it is otherwise in a lost eternity. There the money so long coveted is gone. The chase after it lasts for ever, but its enjoyment never comes. It is not necessary for us to call in imagination to describe the terrors of that state. It is enough for us to know that the passions of this life continue to rage in the heart desolated by them, while the objects of those passions are gone. It is an incessant agonising alternation between a frenzied search and a still more frenzied despair.

“AS THY DAYS, SO SHALL THY STRENGTH BE.”

WHAT we are to look for is, not grace for imaginary purposes, but for real; not grace for future difficulties, but present; or, as the apostle has it, grace to “help in time of need.” It does not, therefore, follow, that what is formidable in the prospect, may be so in the event. You may fear death while living, and rejoice in it at last. “Is this,” said Dr. Goodwin, “is *this* dying? Is this the enemy that dismayed me so long—now appearing so harmless, and even pleasant?”

A PLACE FOR PRAYER.

"WHERE do you find a place to pray in?" was asked of a pious sailor on board a whaling ship. "Oh," he said, "I can always find a quiet spot at the mast-head."

"Sam, do you find a spot for secret prayer?" asked a minister of a stable-boy. "Oh yes, sir; that old coach is my closet, and it is the best spot on earth." Where there is a heart to pray, it is easy enough to find a place.

ACCOUNTABILITY.

I HAVE seen Laura Bridgman, whom God sent into this world without sight, hearing, or the power of speech. She could see nothing, hear nothing, ask nothing. To her the very thunder has ever been silence, and the sun blackness. The tips of her fingers and the palms of her hands have been her eyes, and ears, and tongue. Yet that poor sickly girl knows much of the earth, and language, and numbers; of human relationships and passions; of what is, has been, shall be, should be; of sin, and death, and hell; of God, and Christ, and heaven. And all this has gone through the poor child's slender fingers, darkly feeling the fingers of another; and thus she tells her hopes, and fears, and sorrows. And if she, groping so blindly for the Saviour, finds Him, and rests her weak hands on His lowly head—that blessed head which bows lowly enough even for this—O how will she rise up in judgment (Matt. xii. 41, 42) and condemn, with utter overwhelming, you, O sinners! upon whose souls every sense is pouring the knowledge of God, while your eyes read His Holy Word, and your ears hear, a thousand times over, these tidings of great joy—even the glorious Gospel of the blessed God! (1 Tim. i. 11.)—*Dr. Hoge.*

Outlines of a Sunday School Address.

THE HOLY CITY.

"That great city, the holy Jerusalem."—REV. xxi. 10.

1. "IT is a *great city*." "That great city," said John, *gazing* on it. Its circuit is vast—beyond Babylon or Nineveh, Paris or London. John calls Babylon the Great that "mighty

city" (Rev. xiii. 10); but this is mightier far. There has been no city like it. It is *the* city, the one city, the great metropolis of the mighty universe, the mighty city of the mighty God.

2. It is a *well-built* city. Its Builder and Maker is God. Its foundations are eternal; its walls are jasper; its gates pearls; its streets gold. It is "compactly built together," lying four-square, and perfect in all its parts, without break or flaw, weakness or deformity.

3. It is a *well-lighted* city. Something brighter than sun or moon is given to fill its heaven. The glory of God lightens it. The Lamb is its "light," or "lamp," so that it needs no candle, no sunlight. There is no night there.

4. It is a *well-watered* city. A pure river of the water of life flows through its midst, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb. What must its waters be? What must be the rivers of pleasure there? Who in it shall ever thirst? Its inhabitants shall thirst no more.

5. It is a *well-provisioned* city. The tree of life is there, and its twelve varieties of fruits and its health-giving leaves. It has more than Eden had; it is Paradise restored. Paradise and Jerusalem in one; Jerusalem in Paradise, and Paradise in Jerusalem.

6. It is a *well-guarded* city. Not only has it gates, and walls, and towers, which no enemy could scale or force, but at the gates are twelve angels keeping perpetual watch.

7. It is a *well-governed* city. Its King is the Son of God, the King of kings, Immanuel; the King eternal, whose sceptre is righteousness; who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. No misrule is there, no disorder, no lawlessness.

8. It is a *well-peopled* city. It has gathered within its walls all generations of the redeemed. Its population is as the sands or the stars; the multitudes that no man can number; the millions of the risen and glorified.

9. It is a *holy* city. Its origin is heavenly, and it is perfect as its Builder. Nothing that defileth shall enter—no spot, nor speck, nor shadow of evil. All is perfection there—divine perfection.

10. It is a *glorious* city. The glory that fills it and encircles it is the glory of God. All precious stones are there; no marble nor granite, such as we boast of now; all about it is gold and pearls and gems. Everything resplendent is there.

11. It is a *blessed* city. It is truly "the joyous city." It is the throne and seat of the Blessed One, and all in it is like Him. Its name is Jerusalem, the city of peace; its King's name is Solomon, the Prince of peace. There is no enemy

there, no danger, no darkness, no sickness, no curse, no death, no weeping, no pain, no sorrow, no change for ever. They that dwell in it "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." Rev. vii. 16, 17; for the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to it with songs; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isa. xxxv. 10. Blessed city! City of peace and love and song! Fit accompaniment of the new heavens; fit metropolis of the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness! How eagerly should we look for it! How worthy of it should we live!

H. BONAR.

Preachers and their Preaching.

A REMINISCENCE.

WHEN the celebrated "Billy Dawson" visited Ireland as Deputation from the Parent Missionary Society, it was my privilege to accompany him for good part of a fortnight. His conversation, prayers, sermons, and speeches, left an indelible impression. Cheerful and communicative, his aim in every company seemed to be the *diffusion of happiness* around. Of all the originals I ever met he was the greatest. What appeared strange and startling, however, at first, always left a good trace upon the memory and heart. A few examples may be given:—At family worship in Carlow, when quoting—

"Worthy the Lamb that died, they cry,
To be exalted thus,"

he cried out, "Stop, Gabriel! You daren't sing the next line. That's our privilege:

"'Worthy the Lamb, our hearts reply,
For *He was slain for us!*'"

In the missionary meeting, a Presbyterian and Independent minister were on the platform. Assuming that they were Calvinistic in their creed, he ingeniously showed that their devotions were in conflict with their doctrinal principles. "Gentlemen," he said, turning to them, "You have your *all's* and your *every's* as well as ourselves. We Methodists give out:

"'O Jesus ride on till *all* are subdued,
Thy mercy make known, and sprinkle Thy blood;
Display Thy salvation and teach the new song
To *every* nation and people and tongue.'

Whereas you Calvinists pray, while you sing:

“From *all* that dwell below the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise;
Let the Redeemer's name be sung
Through *every* land, by *every* tongue.”

The two ministers were convulsed with laughter. He gave us his famous “agricultural speech” at Maryborough. There was great *unity* in his speeches. He started with a leading idea which he wrought out with an exuberance of imagery and illustration to the close. In this speech his prominent thought was “*enclosing land*.” “Mr. Wesley,” he said, “began to enclose at Oxford. First he enclosed his brother Charles, Mr. Whitefield, and others. Then he went to enclose in the Gaol. After a while he came to enclose in Ireland. At last his heart got so large, that he resolved to enclose the *world*, for, said he, “the world's my parish.” The land enclosed, his next operation was to “clear away the brushwood.” For this purpose he employed what he called “the axe of the letter of the law.” This done, he proceeded to plough up the land; and here he quoted several Scriptures with telling effect—the language of an awakened and anxious sinner. The fallow ground of the heart thus thoroughly broken up, he commenced to cast in the seed; and during this process the people—many of them farmers from the surrounding country—were smiling through their tears. “The preacher,” he said, as we do in Yorkshire, “*sows with both hands*,” then throwing out his right, he quoted, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Then his left: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;” then again his right: “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only.” Here pausing, he added with energy, “And this is enough to heave one's shoulder out—but also for the sins of the *whole* world”—giving his arm a wide sweep.

The same evening he preached on the parable of the lost sheep. (Luke xv.) His introduction was unique: “I often wish,” he said, “that I was alive in the time of our Lord. For if I were, I should have great curiosity to get this scene painted—our Lord receiving sinners, and the Scribes and Pharisees murmuring. Well, suppose I had my wish. There I have Sir Thomas Laurence, or Sir Joshua Reynolds employed.” Here he imitated the painter for several seconds without uttering a word. The three ministers who sat behind him in the pulpit smiled at each other, wondering what was to follow. Breaking silence at last, and uttering the language of the painter, he exclaimed, “I can't do it! There is so much of benignity—so much of compassion—so much of heaven in that countenance, I

can't express it. But be sure he wouldn't find it hard to take off these Scribes and Pharisees, turning up their noses and saying, 'This Man receiveth sinners.'" His appeals to the prodigal rushing to ruin, despite a mother's prayers and a Saviour's agonies, were truly affecting and powerful; while ever and anon his entreaty, "Stop, sinner!" rang through the house with thrilling pathos. It was a night to be remembered.

My intercourse with this good and singularly gifted man at that time is one of the most pleasant memories of my life.—*Rev. R. Hutson (Sketches from my Note Book).*

Books.

How to Pray, and what to Pray for. By the Rev. EDWARD J. ROBINSON. London: Wesleyan Conference Office.—This is a well-written book in every sense. Its style, its doctrine, its spirit, its thought, and its aim are such as commend it to our judgment, and render it highly adapted to teach men how to pray, and what to pray for. And to accomplish this in such an age of formalism, rationalism, and scepticism as ours, is a work of high praise and reward.—*The Mission of the Spirit; or, The Office and Work of the Comforter in Human Redemption.* By the Rev. L. R. DUNN.—This volume is issued by the Wesleyan Book-room, and the author is a minister belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States. It is edited by the Rev. J. Bush. We commend it as a valuable exposition of the office and work of the Holy Spirit in man's salvation.—*Entire Sanctification Attainable in this Life* is the name of a recent volume published by the Wesleyan Book-room, in the "Methodist Family" library. It comprises—First, Mr. Wesley's Plain Account of Christian Perfection; and, secondly, Mr. Fletcher's Practical Application of the Doctrine to Various Classes of Christians. This is a volume which we

wish every lay preacher to read.—*The Authentic Report of the Discussion held in Rome*, translated by the Rev. W. ARTHUR, A.M., has recently been published by the same house as the above. Anyone who feels an interest in the question, Whether Peter was ever in Rome? will be much profited in reading this book. The Catholic Priests have much *show* of logic in their favour; but the evangelical ministers have more *real* logic on their side.—*Handbook of Bible Geography.* By Rev. G. H. WHITNEY, A.M. London: Hodder and Stoughton.—This is a very valuable book for all ministers and teachers. It is complete as a book of reference in Bible Geography. We know of none equal to it. It is beautifully illustrated with forty maps and plans, and nearly one hundred engravings.—*The Family Friend and Children's Friend*, published monthly by Partridge & Co., contain most exquisitely executed engravings, and good readable matter.—*The Prayer Meeting Advocate and Christian Workman*, published by the same house, is a new penny monthly, highly calculated to sustain the means of grace in a church, and promote a revival among its members. We earnestly recommend it.



THE LAY PREACHER.

The Spirit Within.

IT is the ruling spirit within that gives character, action, and influence to its subject. The spirit of a wolf ruling in a sheep would make that sheep essentially a wolf; the spirit of a lion ruling in an ox would, in the same way, make the ox a lion. Each would retain its own form as a sheep or an ox, but the spirit ruling within it would produce in action those things which would harmonise, not with the *form* which it bore, but with the *spirit* which it possessed. So it is in the world of vegetation. Each flower, plant, or shrub has its own peculiar spirit of life, which gives to it its own distinct and positive place in the world of vegetation. It is so in the world of politics. The spirit of any particular side of political polity gives its subjects the character that belongs to that side. It is so in the world of religion. The spirit of Protestantism in a man makes him a Protestant; and the spirit of Romanism in a man makes him a Romanist. It is thus when we come to religion as distinct from names and sects. A man may have the form and name of a Christian, but if he is possessed of the spirit of the world in a predominant degree, this gives him

the character of a worldling, notwithstanding his name and form of a Christian. If a man have the name and form of a worldling, but possess in a ruling degree the Spirit of Christ, he is a Christian, although he have the name and form of worldliness. The appearances are not always the criteria of judgment, though, as a rule, the *predominant* spirit of a man gives form as well as character to him. A man who has more of the spirit of the Church of England in him than the Spirit of Jesus, will show himself more as a Church of England man than a Christian. A member of the Methodist Church, with the spirit of Methodism predominant within him, will manifest himself to be more a Methodist than a Christian. On the other hand, either of them, or any adherent to a church organisation, possessed of the Spirit of Jesus in a predominant measure, will demonstrate himself to be a Christian more clearly, boldly, forcibly, than he will a member of this or that church organisation. Now, as the highest spirit in connection with materialism is the spirit of man, so the highest Spirit in connection with religion is the Spirit of Christ. When the Creator had made man in the form, He breathed into him the *breath of life*. This was the highest and noblest life in all the world of life which hitherto had moved on the earth. When Jesus wished to make His disciples model workmen in His vineyard, and model followers of His religion, and model representatives of Himself before the world, He did not leave them in the form into which He had moulded them, in truth, in faith, in morality, during His three years' ministry. No. He breathed upon them the Holy Ghost. He baptized them with His Spirit; and this Spirit was in them the highest and noblest form of religious life that the world had ever witnessed.

The Spirit of Jesus is the Spirit of truth, love, purity, meekness, gentleness, longsuffering, patience, self-

denial, freedom, power, prayer, forgiveness—THE SPIRIT OF GOD. This Spirit is above reason, science, culture, politics, merchandise, nature, denominationalism. We do not say *contrary* to them, but *above* them; that is, *superior* to them. Consequently, he who possesses the Spirit of Jesus is a higher style of man than he who, void of this Spirit, possesses the highest spirit to be found within the whole range of the Divine administration. Hence we find that the character of a Christian in its highest kind is not formed by reason, culture, science, or even by the *letter* of Divine teaching or the *form* of Divine religion, but by the *indwelling of the Spirit of Jesus*. In Scripture teachings we are not recognised as possessing anything sublimely good until we have the Spirit of Jesus dwelling within us. We have not the highest liberty without the Spirit of the Lord. We are not without condemnation only as we walk after, or in, the Spirit. We are none of Christ's if we have not His Spirit. We only know ourselves to be the children of God by His Spirit telling us so. We can only pray as we pray in the Holy Ghost. We can only behold the glory of the Lord and be changed into the same image, as we are influenced by His Spirit. We can only be guided into truth and know Divine things, as His Spirit teaches us. And so we find that everything which is really sublime and perfect in the highest region of thought, morals, and religion can only be attained by the indwelling Spirit of Jesus.

Now, this is the Spirit promised to us, purchased for us; the Spirit we are exhorted to seek, to pray for, to believe for, and not to rest until we receive.

We can only reach the goal to which we are called, by this Spirit. We are called to perfection in Christ, to be followers of the Lamb, to be witnesses and workers for Jesus; but we cannot obey the call without the indwelling of His Holy Spirit.

Without Him life will be a failure. We may do some things as men, as citizens, as members of churches; but we shall do no more than the spirit of men, of citizens, of members of churches will enable us. We shall not rise above our own strength, and wisdom, and goodness. Our life will be a failure so far as accomplishing the will of God in Christ Jesus. We may do something, but not that which it is our calling to do by the might and wisdom of the Holy Ghost.

The Psalmist could fight and leap without his God, but with his God he said he could leap over a wall, and press his way through a troop. Elisha could walk, and talk, and pray, and teach, before the spirit of Elijah came upon him; but after he received the baptism of a double portion of Elijah's spirit, he could equal him in all holy and wonderful deeds. The apostles could speak, and think, and pray, before the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them; but when He came in living fire, and sat upon them, and entered into them, they were able to do exceeding abundantly above all that they had done before. In each of these cases life would have been a failure without the Spirit, in comparison with what it did become by the indwelling of Him.

So we may sing, pray, think, teach in the Sunday School, preach in the pulpit, exhort in the prayer-meeting, and conceive that we are doing our duty; and others may have no fault to find with us in these things. Yet in all there will be a failure, in so far as we have performed them without the Spirit—a failure in comparison with what we should have done under His Divine illumination and power.

What would the lives of Wesley, Whitefield, Smith, Stoner, Carey, and such like, have been without the baptism of the Spirit, in comparison with what they actually were under His light, life, and fire?

A vessel—laden, full-rigged, and ready for the passage—loosed from her moorings, may drift down the river on the natural current, or by the ebb of the tide, and she may heave and toss on the swelling bosom of the ocean; but if the wind blow a favourable breeze, and fill her canvas, she will sail on in rapid, steady progress, until she come to the desired haven. An engine skilfully constructed and exquisitely finished may, by the natural force of human or animal power, be moved in its cogs and wheels, and perform some evolutions; but worked with steam, for which it is intended, and according to its capacity, it will accomplish work compared with which all human or animal force put into it would be nothing.

The Church, in her well-arranged system of divinity, in her compact order of discipline, in her long-established means and ordinances, may, like the vessel or the engine, move and work by the moral, intellectual, physical, and material combination of her membership. They may drag her on as we have seen men drag boats on a canal, or horses draw carriages on a railway; but this is not the progress which becomes the Church, which comports with her organisation, with her destiny. No, no. The Church is organised by her Head with a view to be filled with the Holy Ghost, and it is only when He dwells and reigns within her that she comes forth in her marches through the nations, bright as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners—going on conquering and to conquer.



CARNAL CONFIDENCE is a vice whereby the heart of man rest itself in the looking for any good of any kind from anything but God alone. He is carnally confident which promiseth himself anything desirable—as health, deliverance out of trouble, long life—because he has such and such outward means, which he thinks are able to bring forth such safety unto him.—*E. Leigh.*

The Parables.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE definition of the term "parable" has been so various, that to fix upon any one is difficult. The word literally signifies *comparison*, or to put one thing before or beside another, that they may be compared. "Parables," says Nicholls, "generally draw a comparison, and point out a likeness between supposed and actual occurrences, or more frequently between natural and spiritual things." Parables are earthly words with heavenly meanings, or material things setting forth spiritual facts.

By some writers the parable has been confounded with other figurative modes of speech, such as the fable, the proverb, the allegory and the mythus. The difference, although, not striking to the superficial mind, is nevertheless obvious. Archbishop Trench points out the difference with admirable nicety and clearness. "There are some who have identified the parable with the *Æsopic fable* or, drawn a slight and hardly perceptible line of distinction between the two; as, for instance, Lessing and Storr, who affirm that the fable relates an event as having actually taken place at a certain time, while the parable only assumes it as possible. But not to say that examples altogether fail to bear them out in this assertion, the difference is much more real, and far more deeply seated than this. The parable is constructed to set forth a truth spiritual and heavenly; this the fable, with all its value, is not. It is essentially of the earth, and never lifts itself above the earth." Its highest aim does not go beyond touching maxims of morality, industry, foresight, and prudence, which the world can understand and appreciate. But the parable inculcates truths which pertain to God, eternity, the soul, repentance, faith, justification—truths which the world nor anything in it can lucidly and forcibly expand.

The parable is different to the *mythus*. "The mythic narrative," says Trench, "presents itself not merely as the vehicle of the truth, but as itself being the truth; while in the parable there is a perfect consciousness in all minds of the distinctness between form and essence, shell and kernel, the precious vessel and yet more precious wine which it contains."

The parable differs from the *proverb* in being more lengthily carried out, and of necessity figurative in its language.

The parable differs from the *allegory* in this: the former, as we have said, compares one thing *with* another, keeping them

all through the comparison apart as one the outer and the other the inner; the allegory, on the contrary, while it has two things to deal with, transfers the "qualities and relations of one to the other."

Teaching by parable is of very ancient date and extensive use. No teacher of spiritual things can do well without it. The more vivid his conceptions of things unseen in the higher world, the more ready and full his use of this form of conveying them. He whose aim it is to make deep and lasting impression on the minds of his hearers, will avail himself as much as possible of the parabolic vehicle of thought.

Jesus Christ, of whom as a Teacher it is said, "Never man spake like this Man," without a parable spake He not unto the people. "He gave," says Trench, "no doctrine in an abstract form, no skeletons of truth, but all clothed, as it were, with flesh and blood. He did as He declared His apostles must do, if they would be Scribes instructed in the kingdom, and able to instruct others (Matt. xiii. 52). He brought forth out of His treasure things new and old: by the help of the old he made intelligible the new; by the aid of the familiar He introduced that which was strange; from the known He passed more easily to the unknown. And in His own manner of teaching He has given us the secret of all effectual teaching, of all speaking which shall leave, as was said of the eloquence of Pericles, things in the minds and memories of the hearers. There is a natural delight in this manner of teaching, appealing as it does, not to the understanding only, but to the feelings, to the imagination, and, in short, to the whole man; calling the whole man, with all his powers and faculties, into pleasurable activity, and things thus learned with delight are those longest remembered."

Had Jesus Christ taught in mere dogmatic language or in dry logical processes, and in philosophical reasoning His teaching would have lost interest to His hearers, and have passed away, leaving no trace of influence upon heart or life. But His words were of such vigour, beauty, commendation, blended in figures with which they were familiar, that the memory could not refrain treasuring them. "His words laid up in the memory, were to many that heard Him, like the money of another country, unavailable for present use—the value of which they only dimly knew, but which yet was ready in their hand, when they reached that land and were naturalised in it. When the Spirit came, and brought all things to their remembrance, then He filled all the outlines of truth which they before possessed with its substance, quickened all its forms with power and spirit of life."

The number of parables spoken by our Lord is variously given by different writers. Archbishop Trench gives thirty—viz., 1. The Sower. 2. The Tares. 3. The Mustard Seed. 4. The Leaven. 5. The Hid Treasure. 6. The Pearl of Great Price. 7. The Draw Net. 8. The Unmerciful Servant. 9. The Labourers in the Vineyard. 10. The Two Sons. 11. The Wicked Husbandmen. 12. The Marriage of the King's Son. 13. The Ten Virgins. 14. The Talents. 15. The Seed Growing. 16. The Two Debtors. 17. The Good Samaritan. 18. The Friend at Midnight. 19. The Rich Fool. 20. The Barren Fig Tree. 21. The Great Supper. 22. The Lost Sheep. 23. The Lost Piece of Money. 24. The Prodigal Son. 25. The Unjust Steward. 26. The Rich Man and Lazarus. 27. Unprofitable Servants. 28. The Unjust Judge. 29. The Pharisee and the Publican. 30. The Pounds.

The Rev. W. Arnot, in his work on the Parables, follows the archbishop both in order and in number. Nichols gives as the number thirty-two. The two additional which he names, are the Vine and the Branches, and the Door and the Good Shepherd, which Trench says are allegories. Keach gives thirty-six as the number, adding the two already named, with the Tower, the Piece of Cloth, the Servant Ploughing in the Field, and the Strong Man Armed.

The *Scripture Text Book* gives fifty-two as the number of our Lord's parables adding as the twelve, more than Trench and Arnot—1. The Wise and Foolish Builders. 2. New Cloth and Old Garment. 3. New Wine in Old Bottles. 4. Children of the Bridechamber. 5. The Kingdom divided against itself. 6. The House divided against itself. 7. The Vine and Branches. 8. The Good Shepherd. 9. The Lost Piece of Silver. 10. The Beam and Mote. 11. The Blind leading the Blind. 12. The Lighted Candle.

These different lists of the number of Christ's parables arise from the different shades of opinion as to what constitutes a parable. Trench and Arnot adhere to the distinction between the parable and the proverb. Nichols and Keach do not observe this distinction. Hence the variation in the numbers.

The Archbishop of Dublin, in speaking of the distinctive character of the parables, recorded by the evangelists, remarks:—"St. Matthew's are more theocratic, St. Luke's, more ethical; St. Matthew's are more parables of judgment, St. Luke's of mercy; those are statelier, these tenderer. St. Matthew's are frequently introduced as containing mysteries of the kingdom of God, language which nowhere occurs in St. Luke. In St. Matthew's, God evermore appears as the King, who, sitting on His throne, scattereth away all evil, and has a readiness to

avenge all disobedience; thus how many of them conclude with distinct judgment, acts of a greater or less severity (xiii. 42-49; xviii. 34; xx. 14; xxi. 41; xxii. 7-13; xxv. 12-30). Such judgment acts are not wanting in those of St. Luke; but less frequently occur, while mercy supplies to them their ground-tone, as it does to the whole Gospel whereunto they belong. They are of the tree which was spared at the gardener's intercession (xiii. 6); of the Samaritan, who poured oil and wine into the traveller's wounds (x. 30); of the father who welcomed back his penitent son (xv. 11); nay, even the parable of Dives and Lazarus is a parable of mercy, for it is the declaration of what the issues of *not* showing mercy will be."

St. John and St. Mark are not mentioned in the above distinction, because the former is said to have no parables, only the allegories of the Good Shepherd and the True Vine; and the latter has only one parable peculiarly his own (iv. 26); and wherein he records the same as Matthew and Luke, he presents no distinctive features to be noticed.

Before closing our remarks, we would offer a few thoughts on the *interpretation of parables*. The writer from whom we have already largely quoted very beautifully says:—"The parables, fair in their outward form, are yet fairer within, apples of gold in network of silver, each one of them like a casket, itself exquisite workmanship, but in which jewels yet richer than itself are laid up; or as fruit which, however lovely to look upon, is yet in its inner sweetness more delectable still. To find, then, the golden key for this casket, at whose touch it shall reveal its treasures; so to open this fruit that nothing of its hidden kernel shall be missed or lost, has naturally been regarded ever as a matter of high concern."

Without noticing the extremes to which some writers and preachers have gone in their interpretation of the parables, we may lay down a few rules which may guide us in our use of these forms of speech left by our Great Teacher.

Tholuck says, "It must be allowed that a similitude is perfect in proportion as it is on all sides rich in applications; and hence, in treating the parables of Christ, the expositor must proceed on the presumption that there is import in every single point, and only desist from seeking it when either it does not result without forcing, or when we can clearly show that this or that circumstance was merely added for the sake of giving intuitiveness to the narrative. We should not assume anything to be non-essential except when by holding it fast as essential, the unity of the whole is marred and troubled."

2. In giving the interpretation of a parable, it is well as far as possible to ascertain the central truth which is within, and

which the Master aims to set before us for our learning. Leaving all appendages and drapery, let us lay hold of the internal spirit of life and light, and in its revelation make the rest subordinate and contributory. "One may compare," says Lisco, "the entire parable with a circle of which the radii are the several circumstances of the narration; so long as one has not placed himself in the centre, neither the circle itself appears in its perfect shape, nor will the beautiful unity with which the radii converge to a single point be perceived, but this is all observed as soon as the eye looks forth from the centre. Even so in the parable; if we have recognised its middle point, its main doctrine, its full light, then will the proportion and right signification of all particular circumstances be clear unto us, and we shall lay stress upon them only so far as the main truth is thereby more vividly set forth."

3. Another rule to be observed is the right understanding of the *introduction* in the parable and its *application*. This will materially assist in bringing us into the central truth. The neglect of this rule has led to many wild and unjustifiable expositions. In some of the parables the speaker himself gives the help to which we now refer (Matt. xxii. 14; xxv. 13), and sometimes the narrator (Luke xv, 1, 2; xviii. 1). Also see the following:—Luke xviii. 9; xix. 11; Matt. xviii. 23; Matt. xxi. 15; Luke xii. 16, 20. By a careful study of the beginning and end of the parables to which the rule will apply we shall avoid the blunders of human interpretation into which we are liable otherwise to fall.

Arnot, lays down as two supreme qualifications for a proper understanding of the parables, First, a true faith in the verity and divinity of them as spoken by Christ. Secondly, "Sympathy with the view which Jesus took and gave of nature in its fallen state."

He gives as "subordinate" qualifications in the exegesis of the parables—First, "The faculty of perceiving and appreciating analogies. Secondly, "A stern logic is as necessary as a lively imagination." Thirdly, "Some competent acquaintance not only with the Scriptures, but also with the doctrines which the Scriptures contain, arranged in a dogmatic system, is necessary as a safeguard in the interpretation of the parables. Fourthly, "Some knowledge of relative history, topography, and customs, should be at hand for use; but at the same time these things should be resolutely kept in their own place."

Finally, we would observe that in the interpretation of the parables, as of any other portion of Scripture, there is needed apart from all secular acquisitions, spirituality of mind, humility of disposition, the analogy of faith, the lifting up of the heart

for heavenly light, and the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit. This Divine Teacher, possessed by us, will be the most reliable help in seeking the knowledge of our Lord's mind in His parables. If He shall take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, we shall have perceptions of the truth such as no mere scholarship, however extensive, can give us, and which will best serve our purpose for all godly living and official duties. If, as we walk through the "picture gallery" (as they have been called), of our Saviour's parables, we have this Heavenly Interpreter accompany us, we shall see them in all their beauty and loveliness, in all their colours and uses; in such distinctness and vigour as shall make us competent teachers of others in the same subjects of study.

The Biblical Expositor.

SYMBOLIC NUMBERS OF THE APOCALYPSE.

SEVEN is the well-known symbol of completeness, and this is the most prominent number in the book. Thus we have the seven churches of Asia represented by the seven golden candlesticks, and their seven angels represented by seven stars (chap. i. 4, 12, 16, 20); the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God (chap. iv. 5); the seven seals (chap. v. 1); the seven trumpets (chap. viii. 2); the seven thunders (chap. x. 4); the seven last plagues (chap. xv. 1); to which may be added the seven ascriptions of praise—power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory, blessing (chap. v. 12); blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honour, power, might (chap. vii. 12). Lastly, we have the seven heads of the persecuting beasts in all its various forms (chaps. xii. 3; xii. 1; xvii. 3.) So far as the number seven has its fulfilment in the history of the world, we are at liberty to suppose that this is accomplished, in part at least, by the manner in which the wisdom of God has been pleased to group together the events of prophecy—a grouping which is always appropriate, but which might have been different had the plan of representation so required. The final judgments which precede the millennium, for example, which in chaps. xv. and xvi. are set forth under the figure of seven vials full of the wrath of God, might have been, by another mode of distribution, represented under the number two. Many think they are thus represented in chap. xiv. 20. Another prophetic number, occurring in

Daniel and the Apocalypse, always as a designation of time, is the *half of seven*. Thus we have "a time, and times, and half a time—that is, three years and a half (chap. xii. 14); or in months, "forty and two months" (chaps. xi. 2; xiii. 5); or in days, "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (chaps. xi. 3; xii. 6). Compare Daniel vii. 25. Again, answering to these three years and a half, we have the three days and a half during which the two witnesses lie dead (chap. xi. 9, 11). The number *six*, moreover, from its peculiar relation to seven, represents the preparation for the consummation of God's plans. Hence the sixth seal (chap. vi. 12, 17), the sixth trumpet (chap. ix. 14, 21), and the sixth vial (chap. xvi. 12, 16) are each pre-eminent in the series to which they belong. They usher in the awful judgments of Heaven which destroy the wicked. Here, perhaps, we have the key to the symbolic import of the number of the beast, 666. While it represents, according to the principles of Greek numeration, the number of a man, it seems to indicate that upon him fall all the judgments of the sixth seal, and the sixth trumpet, and the sixth vial.

Four is the natural symbol for universality. Thus we have the four living creatures round about the throne (chap. iv. 6), perhaps as symbols of the agencies by which God administers His universal providential government (chaps. vi. 1, 3, 5, 7; xv. 7); the four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, and holding the four winds (chap. vii. 1); and the four angels bound in the river Euphrates (chap. ix. 14). So also in the fourfold enumeration, "kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," or its equivalent (chaps. v. 9; x. 11: xi. 9; xiv. 6; xvii. 15). *A third and a fourth part*, on the contrary, represent what is partial (chaps. vi. 8; vii. 12; ix. 18).

Twelve is the well-known signature of God's people. Compare the twelve tribes of the Old Testament and the twelve apostles of the New; the woman with a crown of twelve stars (chap. xii. 1); the twelve gates, twelve angels, twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem, the twelve times, twelve cubits of its wall, and its tree of life that yields twelve harvests a year (chaps. xxi. 12, 14; xxii. 2). We have also the same number combined with a thousand, the general symbol for a great number. From each of the twelve tribes of Israel are sealed twelve thousand (chap. vii. 4, 8), making for the symbolical number of the redeemed twelve times twelve thousand (chap. xiv. 1, 3), and the walls of the New Jerusalem are in every direction twelve thousand furlongs (chap. xxi. 16).

Ten is possibly only a symbol of diversity, as in the case of the ten horns of the beast (chaps. xii. 3; xiii. 1: xvii. 3) though some take a literal view of it.—*Burrow*.

Love the Motive of Obedience.

A SERMON BY THE LATE REV. G. G. LETTERS.

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments.”—JOHN xiv. 11.

THERE are times and events which try the power of our attachments; times when the winnowing fan of affliction distinguishes the chaff from the wheat, the parasite from the real support, the summer friends from true lovers. Such a test lay a little beyond the utterance of these words. A gust was about to break over the Speaker and His friends, which would make them bend away from His presence, though their rooted affection to Him would still be strong. His friendship, the purest and firmest the world ever saw, stood the test, even in Peter's case, who never ceased to love Him. To eleven troubled souls these words were first spoken. With heavy sorrow-filled hearts and tearful eyes they heard of their beloved Master's departure through death—not on a soft couch, girt by gentle friends—to His Father. While Jesus does not stop the tears, He does not encourage them. “If ye love Me (and I know ye do), show it rather by your obedience than your tears. Keep My commandments, and another, a richer Comforter shall come, who shall never depart, even the Spirit of truth, who shall abide with you for ever.” These words were intended not to be confined to that guestchamber, but to ring out to the whole world. Christ here speaks to all true believers, “If ye love Me, be careful, as a proof of that love, as a means to increase it, to observe the least of My commandments.” It also sounds out a warning to those who profess to love Jesus, yet do not keep His commandments, that their religion is vain. And it is also full of instruction to those who wish to serve God, showing clearly that love must precede the proper keeping of His commandments.

Let us notice—

I. THAT IN ORDER TO KEEP CHRIST'S COMMANDMENTS LOVE IS INDISPENSABLE.

1. The first step, then, an alarmed sinner must take, is to get love to Christ. The first dreamy impulse of the newly-awakened sinner is to go direct to the law, and ere he is right awake, to try to keep all the law, and thus derive life. Under the keen pangs of remorse and terror he keeps the commandments to an extent that is marvellous. But soon the edge of his convictions is blunted, his conscience is quieter, sin revives, and he dies, and feels that *his* strength is not enough to keep the law. His

hopes in that quarter are withered, and end in despairing groans, "Who shall deliver me," &c. "Shall I then not attempt to keep God's law?" Keep what you can keep. If we struggle to obey, that shows we have that sincere earnestness which God never despises. We must not regard sin in our heart, or our mouth-prayers will not be heeded. Every man who hears the great commandment, "Repent and believe the Gospel," has power to obey then and there by the Spirit's help. But only by those in Christ Jesus can His commandments be truly kept.

2. If love must come before service, there rises the mighty question, "How can I love Christ?" A far more difficult question to answer would be, "How can I not love Christ, the altogether lovely?" But we ask in reply, "How did you love anyone?" Was it not through acquaintance, then respect, then admiration, then confidential intercourse? Just so, all our love to God rests on our effort to know Him. When we saw Him mirrored in the Bible, our love flowed to Him as naturally as the tide swells to the moon. If you would love Him, your first duty evidently is, "Acquaint now yourself with God, and be at peace." If you say, "But peace does not come. I feel so uneasy when I realise God as knowing my inner sins. I feel so bad when I am getting to believe I am alone with Him." It is well. The sight of a holy God makes us feel unholy. This is repentance. We cannot love by force; we can only use the means toward that love—repentance and faith. If we use the power of reflection in the light of God's Word—if we turn over the half-forgotten sins, and neglects, and resistances, before the Lamp of truth, we shall see light in His light—we shall get out of love with our lives and our hearts. If we turn from despair, from self-hatred, from eating our own heart, to God's Word, to God's promise, to God's Saviour, and wait patiently on Him till we get a clear sight of Him, a distinct acquaintance with Him, then, through the falling tears, the sun shall shine, and form the rainbow of hope on our cloudy heart. Out of love with self we get into love with Jesus. Seeing His love, we can and do rest under the azure serenity of a cloudless sky. Such is the process, and such the only real, full, ecstatic, command-keeping love—not based on a passing, sentimental admiration such as the hostile, carnal mind may have had at times, but a new affection gushing from a renewed heart.

3. Observe how it is fitting in God to receive *service* thus issuing from love. It is acceptable—(1) Because *the subject is now reconciled*. Though the gifts be small, though the obedience be defective, yet as there is now no defiance, but a loyal desire to serve aright, all is received. A servant who has been discharged for insolence, cannot think his master will have more

of his service till he is reconciled with him. Acts of homage and deeds of service, offered by known rebels would be spurned. Atonement must go before service. (2) Because, not only is the deed changed, but the will which produces it is renewed. It is sincere, not hollow. It is willing service. If we do not enjoy any service rendered us grudgingly, how unpalatable to the heart-seeing and heart-loving God must reluctant obedience be? (3) Because it springs not from fear, but from the highest motive—love. Men can command service from various motives. Fear makes many obey. Hope of gain procures the obedience of many more. But to serve God from a prudential or mercenary spirit cannot meet that welcome God gives to a very weak, defective, yet loving service. A man obeying under these various impulses, often asks about the why, and the results; but one obeying for love, works in a genial unconsciousness—his heart is right, and he follows fearlessly its unselfish instincts. To obey does not need a constant strong effort. It comes as a second nature. He does not ask, What is required of me? but, “What can I do?”

4. Note further how love fits a man to keep Christ's commandments. It is not merely an improver, but the very spring of acceptable service. It not only precedes, but causes service. As the root to the plant, and the fount to the stream, so is love to the true spiritual keeping of God's law. The lower creatures serve God but it is ignorantly; wicked beings, incarnated or spiritual, subserve His purposes unwillingly, like the convicts at Portland, who keep prison rules and do prison work, from feelings of slavish dread. The French obey through fear, while the British have such a love of law, that almost any freedom of speech is allowed. The cowering obeisance of Gaul cannot have the sweet savour to its monarch that our free and willing obedience has to our Queen. Note some reasons why love alone produces thorough obedience—I say thorough, not in the sense of perfect, for all our obedience here is defective and marred, but as essentially complete, having all the elements of the service of heaven. The commandments are substantially, not absolutely, kept. (1.) Because *it frees from* the old paralysing, weakening *dread* of God, and dislike of His accusing and threatening law. How little could a poor, emaciated, weak soldier do in active service of his king, if his recent rebellion had not been forgiven him. How he would waver and tremble, whether old misdeeds might not be laid to his charge. How little could a man do at business, if insolvency hung over him, and he was in hourly danger of arrest and utter ruin. How much could either do if quite assured that they were quite loosened from old charges—that they had a clean start. What energy would that love

inspire? They can serve now from gratitude. So with a sinner upon knowing Christ's love. That love is a constraining power to keep, at any cost, the injunctions of his once dreaded, but now loved Master. (2.) Because it makes us sympathise with Christ. Many things we do not know because we do not wish to know them. Of God's laws we are by nature as willingly ignorant as we can be. We are apt to put the blind eye of Conscience to look at duty. But when we get love's keen insight, we can discern His commandments and keep them. Love seeketh not her own. We love not only Christ, but His people, and His house, and His plans. His schemes to recover and hold fast men are made the business of the loving soul. "Oh, how I love Thy law," he says. This love gives him the patience, the insight, and the power to keep that law. (3.) Because joy is requisite to keep God's law aright. When led to obey through fear, the obedience is constrained by outward motives, danger, punishment, &c., and ceases when they are gone. But what a man delights to obey he continues at, for the spring of obedience is within him. When the law thunders in our ears, we are melted into submission, but to-morrow we may be worshipping a golden calf. But when the law is graven on our hearts; when brought from a dark corner of the conscience chamber, and enshrined in our holy of holies, we still serve God. "I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart." (Ps. xl. 8.) If the service of divers lusts and pleasures, the obedience even of that law which issues in sin and death, were not delightful, how could sinners obey? If it is not as a believer's meat and drink—ever sought after and enjoyed, not forgotten or taken like physic—to do the will of God, how can he cross the desires of his lower nature? We should serve the Lord with more gladness than ever we did sin. We must delight in the law of God ere we can keep it.

5. Do you still linger over the idea of coming to love God in the course of your service? "Am I not to live a holy life?" You must first get a holy heart. "Am I not urged to be steadfast, unmoveable, &c., to be careful to maintain good works?" No. No more than a cripple to run, or a dumb man to repeat the creed. You are yet in your sins. Would you be steadfast in them? How can you maintain really good works, when you have not their right root, love? "Am I not to work out my own salvation with fear and trembling?" No. That is addressed to believers. "What *am* I to do, then, to avoid the wages of sin?" You must do what you can; give up doing with the idea of merit. You cannot now keep God's law, but you may get that love which is the essence of the law. You cannot get this love, so sweet, so mighty to chain down the evil within us, so

strong to empower us to keep gladly Christ's directions, without penitence and trust. This you may do.

II. These words may well convey to *those who profess to love Christ and keep not His commandments* His indignant protest against their inconsistency, and solemn warning of danger. Two classes are here met almost on a level. The one has descended from the heights of love; the other has ascended from the thoughtless world. The former have only a cold love, or it has died out; the latter never did know the love of God. Both admit defects, yet fancy they love Christ and serve Him, though not particular to keep His commandments.

1. Now Christ entreats them to be consistent, that their deeds be not such a glaring contradiction to their words. He prays such men to love not in word only, but in deed. He protests against fruitless profession. What better was it to call Him, "Lord, Lord," while denying everything but His name, doing not the things He said, than the mock homage the men of Herod paid Him when they bowed the knee, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews?" What better is it to speak kindly to the poor brother, "Be ye warmed and filled," while we do nothing more than bend before Jesus in His house, and before mammon or appetite in the world; than to extol His supreme right and loftiest love in hymns of praise, and then be heedless of Him, and never have His name on our lips for a week?

2. This is against reason, and should be stopped at once. "If ye love me"—if there is still a little true affection left, strengthen the things that remain. If the true spirit is there, but weak, let it quicken the letter; let the power fill the form; let the steam act on the machinery of life; let the love get embodied in earnest service. "If ye love Me"—if you value My toil for you, give Me something more than soft words and faint praise. But if not; if the joyless, listless, half-hearted attention to some duties are only like the cold (incenseless) ashes which mark where once the love of Christ burned vehemently; if, in fact, ye do *not* love Me, then, instead of hiding that sad truth from your own eyes by an outward service, seek to have the fire re-lit with the live coal from God's altar. Do the first works, that the first love may return—*i.e.*, repent and trust afresh in Christ. If we fancy, then, that we can love Christ while living in disobedience to Him, we are making a terrible mistake. Even though you did notice the gradual sinking of the flame, as zeal left you, and first works were forsaken, and prayer restrained, and many sins of omission were followed by a few of commission, still if now you do not keep Christ's commandments, you cannot love Him. "If a man love Me," says Jesus, "he will keep My words." "If ye then be risen

with Christ, seek those things which are above," &c. But if you have never known Christ's resurrection-power, ye are yet in your sins. Awake, thou that sleepest and dreamest of Christ's love and His welcome above; awake and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

III. Christ here addresses *those who sincerely love and devotedly serve Him*. We have been trying to show the importance of the emotional part of religion—that love must be the groundwork for a worthy service. Love must preside, accompany, and crown obedience; for love is the end, the fulfilling, as well as the foundation of service. Love is the Alpha and Omega of the law. Emotion leads to action, and action intensifies emotion. The new heart's love leads the soul to keep the commandments; and the keeping of them, so far from being grievous, establishes, strengthens, and settles this too-easily-lost feeling into an abiding disposition, a fixed desire to do God's will. This injunction is not uttered in a harsh, unkind way. It points out the keeping of Christ's commandments as the proof, the defence, and a fuel of love. Obedience is an *evidence* of our attachment. An act of self-denial is more eloquent than the most fervid strains of spirit. It is the sure way to *keep* ourselves in the love of God. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in My love" (John xv. 10-12). When the first excitement and freshness of the new life and the new love are past, and the anthems of the free have subsided into the cries of the weary pilgrims, there is often a tendency to slip out of God's yoke. Then the Antinomian fiend is ready to whisper, "Christ hath freed you from the law; you have love. It answers for obedience; is more precious than the letter-serving spirit. You are in Christ. He has fulfilled the law for you. In Him you are righteous." Never spake Christ so. He says, as you start on your danger-girt journey to the promised land, "If ye love Me, see that ye obey in all things the angel of the Lord." He calls not respect to the law legalism, nor good works dross and rubbish. "Be careful," says Paul, "to maintain good works." Why? cannot we do without them? Yes, as far as justification goes; but not in our final salvation. We were created unto good works. The strength and joy that love brings, Christ intended to be put forth to keep the law; not that the joy should be lost in perfect duty, but that thus His joy in us might remain, and our joy might be full. He intended that purging flame to purify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous (not jealous, as some short-sighted people are) of good works—a people who would rather be broken on the wheel of martyrdom than break one of the least of His commandments.

2. "Keep My commandments." He speaks with the voice of

authority. In His teaching He says not, "Thus saith the Lord;" but again and again, with a lawgiver's emphasis, there rings out, "I say unto you." "*My* commandments." He speaks like a King, like a God.

Though from Adam till the Baptist's time all the commandments came from Him, yet those His own lips promulgated are specially His. Look at some of Christ's peculiar commandments.

(1.) "If ye love Me, remember the new commandment I gave you, brethren, that ye love one another." This had a strange preface, "A new commandment give I unto you." New in its form, new in its special importance, never so much wanted as when Christians were to be treated as Christ was by the world. No less love is to be bestowed on others; but an extra amount of thoughtful, enduring, quenchless love is entreated for the brethren. Just as the good God, who pities all, has a special regard for His own children (though pity for all), as He is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe, so let us love and do good to all, but specially to the household of faith. If we really love Christ, let us take good heed not to fall out by the way. "But I can't endure Brother So-and-so's conduct; he has less charity to me than to ungodly men." And, if so, are you going to do the same to him? Christ forbid! Whatever he do, give thou him a greater share of thy forbearance than the world. How can the love of Christ be in you if you have bitter feelings to the brethren? "We know that we are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren."

(2.) Another commandment relates to our intercourse with the world, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you," &c. If we love self, we will seek to get all, and keep all; but if we love Christ, we have the golden rule ever before us. Rights, claims, dues, and law will be forgotten when every man seeks not his own, but the things of another—the general welfare.

(3.) One other commandment of Christ's we name, because we are apt to forget it. It bears on our duty to other nations. "Go ye into all the world," &c. Now, this is as really a commandment of Christ's, and as binding on us as "repent and believe the Gospel." Alas! how common, and yet how marvellous, that this last wish of our dear Saviour's should be so little heeded! Believers could not count themselves Christians if they neglected the Lord's Supper, when He said, "Drink ye all of it;" yet how can a man think himself a Christian, how can he have the love of Christ, while he deliberately and habitually tramples under foot a plain commandment of Christ's? What kind of gratitude, what faint, languid love, can be satis-

fied with dropping a copper or two in the collection once a year! We ask not what kind of a heart that is which just helps the needy which are just at our door, and unfeeling about the famishing millions outside; but we cannot help exclaiming, How dwelleth the love of Christ in the soul destitute of a missionary spirit? "But these low people, they don't want us." Yes, but Christ does. "But there is so little fruit." Christ will see to that. If ye love, obey; if ye obey, forget not the stewardship—the trusteeship I have laid upon you on behalf of the Greeks and barbarians.

3. One to whom Christ spoke would resent that "if." *Peter* is an example of the evil of separating service from love. He loved much and wished to serve much. He would not take warning that he would be offended, and thus fall. He had no occasion to be where he was, it was not the path of duty, no service to Christ there, and thus his fear over-mastered his love to Christ, and he denied Him. *Paul*, too, served much, for he loved much; and he loved much, for he had much forgiven. Having loved Christ, he served Him with his might, while Demas, unwatchful, let his heart wander back to the world, and his feet soon followed. He could not work, for he did not love: forsook the service of Christ, as his love was drawn back to the beggarly elements of this present world. Wherever we turn, we see instances that whoever has our love has our service; that where our heart is there is our obedience. When Christ cries, "If you love Me," &c., let us cry back, "Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments, for therein do I delight." Let us hinder the schism between love and obedience; yea, the first approach towards that fatal divorce. We cannot love, if we disregard His wishes; we cannot observe His injunctions, if we do not love. The union is as close as that of body and soul: separation is death. The great lesson, brethren, this teaches, is, that if we would love more we must serve more, and if we would serve more we must love more. They react on each other. They grow together. Our faint, flickering love to Jesus is a painful mystery to us. Our feeble, half-hearted service fills us with confusion. But if we can truly reply to that great question, "Lovest thou me?" "Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee;" if Christ says, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep;" if our hearts thus beat and our Christ thus speaks, then let us go on labouring in prayer and praying in labour. Jesus shall make us more loving servants here, and by and bye lead us to that wealthy place, where our service shall be full, glad, and noble, and we shall love with a love like God's for ever.

Leadgate, Oct. 6, 1868.

Materials for Sermons.

XXIV.—THE CHURCH AND HER BELOVED.

“Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?”—SOLOMON’S SONG viii. 5.

HERE are two personages mentioned. One is leaning, the other supporting. Heaven, earth, and hell are astonished at the sight; for it is the Church, the Lamb’s bride, reposing on the bosom of her husband Jesus. For ages they have been the object of wonder. Isaiah, merging into the marvels of the Redeemer’s triumphs, astonished, asks, “Who is this that cometh from Edom?” &c. (lxiii. 1.) When our world was honoured by the touch of the feet of Jesus, and His glorious doings drew myriads to behold His face, as He came to Jerusalem, “All the city was moved, saying, Who is this?” (Matt. xxi. 10.) When John was dwelling in Patmos, he heard the melody of ten thousand singers, and as he beheld them, one of the elders said unto him, “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?” And the comeliness of her deportment combined with the attachment of her beloved draw from the world the cry, “Who is this?” This is a beautiful sight! Here is love returning to its source. Faith clinging to the Saviour.

I. THE SURPRISE EXPRESSED. The Church is an astonishment to the world—

1. *In the choice she has made.* No compulsion. Joshua said, “Choose you,” &c. “Mary hath chosen,” &c. “Moses chose rather,” &c. The world has formed wrong opinions of religion, and when men choose to serve Christ at the risk of life and sacrifice of all things, it exclaims in surprise, “Who is this?” &c.

2. *In the spirit she manifests.* The Spirit of God regulates her conduct. Her unearthly temper, consistent language, fearless courage, excites the cry, “Who is this?”

3. *In the charms she exhibits.* Purity is the prominent characteristic of the Church’s life. Her advancement is so rapid, her supplies so continual, her deliverances so many, her employment so grand, her customs so comely, her walk so graceful, her glory so attractive, that as the eyes of the world are turned towards God’s Church the cry is heard, “Who is this that cometh?” &c.

II. HER PLACE OF SOJOURN.

1. *Notice where she is.* In the wilderness. This is an unsuitable place. Her modest behaviour would be blemished by the dire conduct of its inhabitants. A dangerous place. Thickly wooded, she may become entangled in the way. The hiding-place of ravenous beasts, the man of God may be silently attacked, suddenly wounded, and slain. A lonely place. All the companions of the man of God are leaving this wretched place, and he longs for associates. This leads us to—

2. *Consider what she is doing.* “Coming up.” Leaving her ancient dwelling-place. This implies *progression*. The Christian should strive daily to leave the world farther behind, and get farther from Satan and nearer God. Are you thus progressing in grace? *Perseverance*. The Church is rising, mounting, ascending. It is up hill work, but she is coming up. There are difficulties in the way, but she is coming up. There are enemies around, &c., but she is coming up. My brother, you must persevere.

3. *Observe whither she is travelling.* To freedom from her enemies. Every enemy you conquer leaves one less, and soon thy enemies with thy pilgrimage will cease. To perfect rest. Rest is coming. It is just on before.

III. HER ATTITUDE. “Leaning upon her beloved.” This implies *nearness*. She lives near the heart of Jesus. *Friendship*—endearing, faithful, lasting. “This is my beloved, and this is my friend.” *Protection*. His arm is strong. He will protect thy exposed head. No weapon formed against thee shall prosper. Jesus takes thy part, and only keep leaning and thou art safe. The Church leans

Upon His atonement. You are a sinner, lean upon Jesus for pardon. *Upon the power and wisdom of Jesus.* You are helpless and ignorant. Lean upon Jesus, His power never fails, His wisdom never errs. *Upon the promises of Jesus.* No unfaithfulness with God. You may not trust your neighbours, your friends, or even yourself, but you may Jesus, Has he said, “Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out?” Then rest assured it is so. Has He promised salvation to the believing, comfort to the sorrowing, strength to the trusting? Then you may believe it will be so. The Church leans because

Her strength is feeble. Unequal to the task of journeying. Lean on the strong for strength. He is a Rock that never shakes.

Directions are few. Jesus knows the way, and is interested in thy safe arrival. He is a sun without a cloud, a guide who never errs.

The journey is long. Life is short, but trials make it appear long. The blissful realities of the bright future seem long in coming. Jesus is a Friend who never forsakes. Lean on Him.

"The way is long, my Father, and my soul,
Longs for the rest and quiet of the goal;
While yet I journey through this weary land,
Keep me from wandering, Father, take my hand,
And in the way to endless day lead safely on Thy child."

The road is rough. There are some sharp thorns and rough stones in the way. But lean on Jesus. In Him we have happiness without misery, a rose without a thorn.

Enemies are many. The Christian is attacked often when least expected, and when least thought of. Lean upon Christ, He will fight for you. He is a Captain never beaten.

Chatham, Canada.

G. J. REEVE.

XXV.—THE DISCIPLES CALLED CHRISTIANS.

"And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."—Acts xi. 26.

SUPPOSING the name "Christian" was given these disciples by their enemies: Consider—What there was in their sentiments, temper, and conduct, to induce the people at Antioch to call them Christians?

I. *They received and gloried in Christ as their all in all in the salvation of their souls.* "I am crucified with Christ," &c. Gal. ii. 20. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," &c. Gal. iii. 26-28. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. Gal. vi. 14.

"But what things were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ," &c. Phil. iii. 7-9.

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision," &c. Col. iii. 11.

II. *Their crucifixion and deadness to this sinful world by their knowledge and enjoyment of Christ.* "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman," &c. Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

"I am crucified with Christ," &c. Gal. ii. 20. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. Gal. vi. 14.

Christian and Faithful at Vanity Fair.

III. *Their meekness, patience, and fortitude under their sufferings for Christ.* "Take my yoke upon you," &c. Matt. xi. 29.

"And ye shall be betrayed both by parents," &c. Luke xxi. 16-19.

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John," &c. Acts iv. 13.

"For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults," &c. 1 Pet. ii. 20-24. "Having a good conscience," &c. 1 Pet. iii. 16-18.

IV. *Their love to one another, in imitation of the love of Christ.* "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another," &c. John xiii. 34, 35.

V. *Their looking and longing for Christ's appearing to take them to Himself.* "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly," &c. Phil. iii. 19-21.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," &c. 2 Tim. iv. 8.

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many," &c. Heb. ix. 28.

VI. *Their being anointed with the Holy Spirit, and confessing Him as the author of all good in them.* "But ye are not in the flesh," &c. Rom. viii. 9-11.

"Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ," &c. 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," &c. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," &c. Gal. v. 22. "But ye have an unction from the Holy One," &c. 1 John i. 20.

VII. *Their obedience to Christ in His appointed ordinances.*

Baptism. The three thousand. Eunuch. Jailor.

The Supper. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you," &c. 1 Cor. xi. 23-26.

Reflections.

The very name of Christian is an argument to be holy. "But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto mere ungodliness," &c. 2 Tim. ii. 16-19.

The awfulness of their delusion who have this name without the thing. "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith He that hath the seven spirits of God," &c. Rev. iii. 1.

The evidences of being Christians gradual.

To ourselves. To others.

Christians shall be with their Master, and study and enjoy Him and His religion to eternity.

H. FOSTER.

XXVI.—ALL WELL.

"All is well."—2 KINGS v. 22.—2 SAMUEL xviii. 28.

A SHORT text, but like many others with few words, is full of meaning.

It occurs twice in God's Word; upon both times uttered under peculiar circumstances, though of a widely different character. First, in connection with Absalom's rebellion and the war; Absalom hanged in an oak, and killed by Joab; messenger ran to carry the king word. What should he say? "Absalom is slain" would be too great a shock for the aged king. His words were—"All is well."

Over one hundred years passed by; Elisha's fame spread abroad; Naaman, the Syrian general, told by a little maid to go to the prophet; went, cure prescribed, indignation at it; afterwards went and was cured. Full of gratitude, took presents to Elisha; refused to accept them. Gehazi loved money; fancied he needed some; "as the Lord liveth I will go after him;" went, Naaman saw him coming; alighted, and cried, "Is all well?" and Gehazi answered, "All is well." Words in part true, and in part untrue.

Passages are not always employed by sacred writers with same reference as the original. Thus David, speaking of the heavenly bodies, says (Ps. xix. 4), "Their line is gone throughout all the earth," &c. The same words are used by Paul in Rom. x. 18, with reference to preachers, of whom he says, "Their sound went into all the earth," &c.

It has also been the custom of preachers to apply to texts a different reference, first being sure that the meaning they place upon them agrees with God's Word. Thus the passage, "The harvest is past," &c., is used as descriptive of the state of the unsaved, though in its original and primary reference it only referred to the state of the besieged citizens of Jerusalem when they were expecting salvation through the coming of Pharaoh Necho's army from Egypt.

This is the way in which we would treat these words. As being true of God's dealings with His children in this life.

I. THEY ARE THE LANGUAGE OF THE CHRISTIAN EXCLUSIVELY.

1. Only he can use them with truthfulness. "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him," &c. "Woe to the wicked, for it shall be ill with him," &c. (Isa. iii. 10.) Tendency of sinners to misapply passages to themselves which belong only to the Christian. "All things work together for good," say they; but this is a Christian's promise. It is "Woe to the wicked," not "All is well;" like the sun which melts wax and hardens clay, so nature and providential dispensations, while they bless the Christian, harden the sinner.

2. *The principle which insures all being well.* "They shall eat of the fruit of their doings;" "As ye sow so also shall ye reap," &c.; "Seek first the kingdom of God," &c. Make God your reconciled Father by faith in Jesus, then you secure His guardian care, power, and love; and He makes "all well" with those whom He loves.

3. *Not always true of spiritual state.* This was the error of the Pharisee who was not as others. "All is well," said he, when much was wrong. The error of the church at Laodicea was the same. "All is well," said they, and knew not that they were "poor, and blind, and naked," &c. All is well with our spiritual state only as we live to God, &c. A moment of self-examination will show that here much is not well—deadness to spiritual things, excuses which keep us from private and public devotion, &c., love of money, unchristian temper, &c., &c.

These words, if sincerely spoken and trusted in, bring much comfort and remove care; but we would observe that it—

II. REQUIRES A SPIRIT OF CONTENTMENT AND FAITH to derive the full benefit which this truth should inspire within us.

1. *Contentment.* We have trials and temptations to meet

with. Discontent says, "All would be well if I was not in just this position." If we feel in our wrong place, we cannot feel "all is well;" and not feeling this, we cannot be happy.

Contentment says, "It may be cloudy, rough sailing, but 'all is well,' because I am where God has placed me. Were I in any different position, it would not be well, &c. Though rough, I know my Pilot, Jesus, is at the helm, and I can trust Him."

2. *Faith*. Intimately connected with contentment, one is the fruit of the other; for if we have firm faith in God's providence over us, we must be contented.

Unbelief says, "All would be well if a little (1) different kind of trial, &c.; (2) if less; (3) if I was differently situated; (4) if at a different time; or if I knew *why* these trials were sent.

Faith says, "All is well"—(1) things may *seem* not well; (2) rests upon God's promise, "All things shall work together for good;" (3) true in past, so now; (4) leaves the why, and rests upon, "Thou shall know *hereafter*." Hereafter in heaven, we shall see all has been well, &c. Observe—

III. VERY TRUE AND COMPREHENSIVE LANGUAGE. "All is well"—wants firm, strong faith to feel that "all is well"—sweet and bitter alike.

1. *All circumstances of life*. (1) Times of prosperity—or if changed to adversity. (2) *Afflictions*, sent in love—"my Father sends them." A Friend to help and support—a Captain to protect and guide in battles—"whole armour of God." In *sickness*—the great Physician—"there is more balm in Gilead, and the Physician is not dead, so "all is well." In *adversity*—remembers he is rich—treasures in heaven—poor here, rich there, so "all is well." In time of *bereavement*—one tie less to earth—and if the departed was a Christian, one tie more to heaven—closer connected the visible with the invisible—the earth with heaven—"all is well." *Whatever it may be*, all is well; for it learns us God's statutes—like David, "It was good for me," &c. Leads closer to Christ and to prayer—

"Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer;
Bring me to the Saviour's feet,
Lay me low and keep me there."

2. *At all times of life*—in youth, full activity of life—old age and death. (1) *Youth*—one to guide and preserve—"all is well" for both worlds; if the youth seek Jesus, religion makes the best of both worlds. (2) *In activity of life*. God ever honours those who honour him. Would you have all well? secure God's friendship. (3) *Old age*. When Time has painted the hair white, &c.—retrospect pleasing; promise, "I will never leave Thee," &c.—"all is well." (4) *In death*; "all is well" with the Christian. He has made Christ his Saviour by faith—he is prepared—happy in the hour of death—"O Grave, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?" Friends may be weeping around, but "all is well"—his language is—

"Cease, cease, dear friends, to weep for me,
All is well;
My sins are pardoned, I am free,
All is well.

"Hark! hark! my Lord and Master calls me,
All is well.
I soon shall see His face in glory,
All is well.
Farewell, dear friends, adieu, adieu!
I can no longer stay with you,
My glittering crown appears in view,
All is well, all is well."

3. His prospects are bright—soon be free from all pain and sorrow—soon be with Jesus—all who have gone before—angels, and all the glorified—"all is well."

In conclusion—"all is well" *only* with the Christian—all is *wrong* with the sinner—wrong in life is bad, wrong in death worse, but wrong in eternity is dreadful. Make all well by going to Jesus *now*, make God your reconciled Father, then all will be well at all times and under all circumstances.

T. TAME.

XXVII.—THE KINGDOM AND THE WORLD.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—*MATT. vi. 33.*

THE old empires of Greece and Rome knew what the "things of this world" are, for their history tell of conquest and spoliation.

The remains of Athens and Rome testify to the grandeur and attractiveness of their capitals. Amphitheatres tell of pleasure

and sight-seeing. The baths remind us of their open profligacy. The marble pillars make known the horrors of war. These nations sought to conquer the world and bring it under their respective sway. At the time of Christ Rome herself was a powerful nation, her sway extending over nearly the whole of the then known world. Greece had been subdued, and Judæ had over it a Roman officer.

The majority of inhabitants of the Holy Land thought more of this world's things than of the message Christ Himself had brought to them. He reminded them of Solomon, who pleased God by asking wisdom, and not honour.

The Jews themselves were worldly. They refused the things of the kingdom.

The text speaks to all men; it is a truth to-day, and is worthy of our attention.

We have an exhortation to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

The cry of many is, "What shall we eat? and what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" These are temporal blessings. The soul is immortal, and must be cared for. It is in the Gospel only that the value of the soul can be clearly seen, and its price estimated. What the sun is to the universe, the soul is to the body. Wealth and pleasure satisfy not. "The pleasures of the world are but castles in the air."

The pleasures of the world resemble those flowers the Roman captives had to walk over when they entered the capital of their conquerors—the savour might be sweet, but it was a "savour of death unto death." "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." 1 John ii. 15. "Be not conformed to the world." Rom. xii. 2. "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Matt. xvi. 26.

"Bring earthly blessings to a strict account,
Make fair deductions, see to what they mount."

The whole life of some men consists in money-making: rising early and sitting up late, they exhaust all their energy in striving to be rich. Others purchase large estates, and build splendid mansions, and live in a lordly style; but they give not God the glory. They love the world, and the love of God is not in them. Sorrow, disappointment, and temptation are certain to fall to the lot of those who set their affections on

things below. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof." 1 John ii. 17.

We have also a gracious promise of both temporal and spiritual blessings.

The kingdom of God must be first of all sought after, and this seeking will be followed by "righteousness, joy, and peace." The Gospel transforms. It is a great wealth producer. It is a goodly ship sailing over the ocean of time, with a precious cargo for heaven. It creates happiness in homes and individual hearts. "Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold of her, and happy is everyone that retaineth her." Prov. iii. 16-18. See also Micah iv. 8; Jer. iv. 16; Ps. cxix. 165; 1 Tim. iv. 8.

Illustrations, &c.

"The members of the body, by obeying the dictates of common instinct, thrive and are happy; and man would be happy, too, if he were to 'walk in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly.'"

"The true spirit of religion cheers as well as composes the soul. It is not the business of the Gospel to extirpate the natural affections, but to regulate them."—*Palmer*.

JOHN ROBERTS.

Emblems from Gotthold.

THISTLES;

OR, GOOD AND EVIL.

AS he was one day passing a field, *Gotthold* observed that there were many thistles mixed with the wheat, and rivalling it in growth, on which he observed: We often see the match of this in the world. It happens, for instance, with superior minds; for along with the fine wheat of useful counsels and lofty thoughts, they likewise breed and foster many a thistle of folly and dangerous error. The same thing happens also with our own heart, which, when bedewed with the grace and Spirit of God, sometimes promises to abound with the fruits of right-

eousness. But, alas! how many thistles and weeds does not the enemy scatter among these, and how many grow of themselves, as in all barren land? In fine, the same is also the case with our prosperity and temporal welfare. When our wheat is ripest, and we imagine that nothing remains but to apply the sickle, and gather it in in full sheaves, we find that the Most High has caused thistles to grow amongst it. I mean He has chequered our prosperous state with much adversity, in order that we may recognise the nothingness of the world, and long all the sooner and all the more ardently for heaven.

My God! in the world there is no wisdom without folly, no happiness without misery, no piety without sin, no good without evil, and no use without abuse. O, guide me to the place where Thou Thyself dwellest, and where Thou art surrounded with the adorations of Thine elect. There is no evil with Thee. In Thee I shall possess all things, for Thou wilt be all in all. 1 Cor. xv. 28.

WHITE LILIES;

OR, THE DANGER OF FLATTERY.

GOTTHOLD had pulled a bunch of great white lilies, and having put them into water, placed them in his bed-room. The following night his sleep was sound, and he found in the morning that his apartment was filled with their fragrance. At the same time, however, he also felt his head heavy, and could not shake off a certain lethargy. This reminded him of the opinion of a celebrated physician that the pleasant perfume of flowers should be regarded with suspicion as a secret poison, and excluded from the bed-chamber. The same thing happens with the scent of ambergris. If long inhaled, it produces megrim and giddiness, and may at last even induce death. This, thought *Gotthold* is a meet emblem of worldly fame, and that commendation of men respecting which the Saviour said, *Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.* Luke vi. 26. So captivating is flattery to both head and heart, that many a man is betrayed by it into security, relies too much upon himself, dreams that he is blessed, despises others, and is thus prepared for a fatal fall. With such caresses, the false *Delilah* lulls asleep many a highly-gifted *Samson*. For this reason the apostle well observes, that we should approve ourselves the servants of God, by honour and dishonour, and by good report and evil report. 2 Cor. vi. 8. Many, after vanquishing by patience unmerited obloquy, have been betrayed to ruin by well-merited honour, and so have been humbled by exaltation. It is, therefore, better for a man to be unconscions of his gifts, and never

to hear the voice of praise, than to be misled by praise into presumption. My God! help me always to recognise that in myself I am nothing, and enable me humbly to say with Thy apostle (1 Cor. xv. 10), *By the grace of God I am what I am.*

THE OWL BY NIGHT;

OR, A REMINDER OF DEATH.

GOTTHOLD was one night unable to sleep; and not wishing to waste the time on unprofitable cares and thoughts, he struck a light with materials which he had always near his bed for an emergency of the kind, and began to read the Bible, or, as was well said, to listen to the voice of the Lord speaking to us in that Holy Book. An owl, which haunted the neighbourhood, perceiving the shining of the light, flew to the window, and uttered its usual cry. *Gotthold* thereupon thought with himself: This bird is commonly regarded as the harbinger of misfortune and death, so that many mortally hate it, and show little gratitude for its nocturnal song. Of this common superstition I don't approve, though I will so far make use of it as to accept from the bird an admonition on the subject of my mortality. It may perform to me the office of the chamber-page, who every morning called out to the heathen king, *Remember that thou art a mortal man!* I wish to have, and I look around me for, more of such things, as both by night and day remind me of death, well knowing that nothing so effectually promotes a godly walk, contempt of the world, and aspirations after heaven. I will make death my friend, and try to keep in good acquaintance with him, in order that I may grow familiar with his appearance, and so welcome him all the more joyfully when he comes with a commission from my God to take me out of the world.

DEATH.

GOTTHOLD proceeded: Many a man has an ill-favoured countenance, is lean and haggard, pale and sallow, and mean in his attire, who yet, under an ungainly exterior, conceals great talents and virtues. Such is the case with death. Ah me! how much of what is good, and sweet, and blessed, is concealed beneath its sour aspect and transient bitterness. *It is not I who die when I die, but my sin and misery.* As often as I think of death, I figure to myself that I see a messenger coming from a distant land, bringing me good news of my Saviour, the Bridegroom of my soul, and of the inheritance which He has purchased with His blood, and reserves for me in heaven. What care I although the messenger have an ugly

face, be armed with a long dart, wear a tattered coat, and knock rudely at my door? I attend less to his appearance than to his business.

My faithful Saviour! It should not distress me though all the birds of the air were daily and hourly to sing and discourse to me of my mortality. The nectar I sip from Thy dripping wounds swallows up the few bitter drops which death pours out to me from his cup, at my departure from this world. What, Lord Jesus, should I long for more than to depart and be with Thee!

THE BUTTERFLY CATCHERS;

OR, LITERARY INQUISITIVENESS.

GETTHOLD one day saw a party of boys pursuing butterflies in a garden, and was amused to observe the pains and trouble which the little fowlers took to catch the gay insects. He remarked to a friend who was present: Do you know whom these children resemble? They resemble those learned and ingenious scholars who start all manner of useless questions, and thereby evince less skill and judgment than curiosity and pride. What else are soaring and ambitious thoughts and speculations but insects such as these; and why may not the folly of the learned be quite as great as that of these children? The one imagine that they have caught no common prey when they broach some strange, fantastic, and abstruse notion or query respecting spiritual or temporal things. Tell me, however, if they derive more benefit from it than the children do from what they catch. And yet, unfortunately, the world is come to such a pass, that he who will not, or who cannot, hunt and catch such moths and painted flies, is looked upon as a weak-minded man. No doubt, when learning is conjoined with piety, it is like the diamond glittering and sparkling in a setting of gold, or like golden apples in dishes of silver. If, however, I must choose between the two, I prefer piety, and will rather gain heaven with the unlearned, than be damned with accomplished and able men.

What is science without conscience?

My God, I know that in this life our knowledge is but in part, and that the chief and noblest of all sciences is to know Thee and the Lord Jesus. For this reason, I will devote all my diligence to believing in Christ, loving and patiently following Him.

Definition of Terms and Phrases.

ANGELS.—According to the intimations which Scripture and ecclesiastical teaching afford us respecting the nature and essence of angels, we must represent them to our minds as pure spirits, and not, like men attached to bodies and limited by the conditions of space. Their home is heaven, but not heaven in the astronomical meaning of the expression, but rather heaven in the intellectual and spiritual sense. If, on the one hand, they are entirely unshackled by the conditions of space, just as little, on the other, are they subjected to the conditions of time. An angel cannot become old. Youth and age are antitheses which have no meaning as applied to them. Although they have an origin, and, indeed, may be said to have a history in so far as a falling off from God has taken place in the angel-world, yet have they no history in the sense of a continuous development, a continuous progress and advance to a state of maturity. For, from the beginning of their existence, the angels have ranged themselves either on the side of God or against him, and it is only in so far as they enter into the world of mankind that they have any part in progressive history. Passing out of that heavenly kingdom in which the good angels sing the praises of the Most High, the angels enter the world of man, and work as spirits of light, for the furtherance of the kingdom of God upon earth.—*Dr. H. Martensen.*

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.—1. There is such a thing as *Christian Perfection*, for it is again and again mentioned in Scripture. 2. It is not so early as justification; for justified persons are "to go on to perfection." (Heb. vi. 1.) 3. It is not so late as death; for St. Paul speaks of living men that were perfect. (Phil. iii. 15.) 4. It is not *absolute*. Absolute perfection belongs not to man nor angels, but to God alone. 5. It does not make a man *infallible*; none is infallible while he remains in the body. 6. It is *perfect love*. (1 John iv. 18.) This is the essence of it; its properties or inseparable fruits, are *rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks*. (1 Thess. v. 16.) 7. It is *improveable*. It is so far from lying in an indivisible point, from being incapable of increase, that one perfected in love may grow in grace swifter than he did before. 8. It is *amissible*, capable of being lost; of which we have had instances.—*J. Wesley.*

MAN.—That part of the creation which we call nature attains its culminating point in man, in whom God and the creation

meet and become united. It is for this reason that Christian thought has contemplated man both as a microcosm and as a microtheism, as an image of the world and an image of God.
—*Dr. H. Martensen.*

PRE-EXISTENCE OF SOULS.—We cannot assign any other signification to the representation of the *pre-existence* of souls than this: that souls have pre-existed as *possibilities* in the depths of the Divine creative power, a position which may easily be reconciled with another—namely, that souls have been laid down as possibilities in the depths of the nature of the species.
—*Dr. H. Martensen.*

BARBARISM.—Barbarism is not only opposed to *culture*, is not only a want of education, but is just as much opposed to a true uncorrupted *nature*; it is indeed a perversion of the original relations of nature. In history, in the moral world, barbarism is precisely that which *chaos* is in nature, a disorder in the fundamental elements of human nature.—*Dr. H. Martensen.*

COVENANT OF WORKS.—The first covenant was a covenant of works, so called from the condition of the covenant which did require personal and perfect obedience: "This do and thou shalt live;" and that under a penalty of a curse for the least deviation. "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things written in the Book of the Law, to do them."—*H. Wilkinson.*

THE ETERNAL GENERATION OF CHRIST AS THE SON.—The eternal generation of the Son is commonly defined to be an eternal personal act of the Father, wherein, by necessity of nature, not by choice of will, he generates the person (not the essence) of the Son, by communicating to Him the whole indivisible substance of the Godhead, without division, alienation, or change; so that the Son is the express image of His Father's person, and eternally continues, not from the Father, but in the Father, and the Father in the Son. See particularly Heb. i. 3; John x. 38; xiv. 11; xvii. 21. The principal Scriptural support of the doctrine of derivation is John v. 26.—*A. A. Hodge.*

CHARITY SERMON.—According to the accepted definition of it means the pathetic exposition by a preacher of some object of benevolence, designed to work upon the sensibilities of the hearers, and to draw from them assistance in the way of money.—*Dr. E. M. Goulburn.*

CHRIST AS A KING.—1. Christ, as a King, erects and sets up His throne in the hearts of His people, giving them grace to destroy and subdue every rebellious lust and habit of sin, that it never reign there.

2. He subdues Satan and shortens his power. "I saw Satan fall from heaven."

3. By conquering death itself, "the last enemy to be destroyed."

4. By erecting a universal power. (1.) In respect of all ages. (2.) Over all men. (3.) Over all creatures. Our duties to Him as King are—

1. That we be obedient, faithful subjects to Him.
 2. That we trust and petition Him for our protection.
 3. That we fight His battles against sin and Satan.
 4. That we pay Him His tribute of honour and reverence.
 5. That we tremble at His word, His threats, His judgments.
- Bp. Nicholson.*

Preacher's Counsellor.

JOKING PREACHERS.

YOU speak of wit and humour, of jokes and anecdotes. Alas! I cannot dwell here. If there be not a speedy end to these, the Church is marred, if not undone. I can only say, Keep away from these joking ministers, or get them converted to God. Swearing and joking are different, and the former is reputed more profane; but as to religion, after much experience and observation, I have no doubt that they are equally sure to kill religion out of their souls, and make the heart, so far as the Spirit's graces are concerned, a desert waste.

What a tremendous responsibility rests upon the man, commissioned by God Himself, as an ambassador for Christ! What a power is he for good or evil! What an influence does he exert for right or wrong! How can a man called to his work trifle? How can a man joke, and then preach? Does he forget that *sin* is sin? How my heart has been saddened when I have seen ministers in the social circle, surrounded by those who looked up to them as men of God, and as exemplars of the Gospel they preached, abuse the talents God gave them to use for His glory by indulging in light and unprofitable conversation, and in jesting with each other, thus influencing others in the wrong.

"Let your speech be always with grace," is the command of the Bible, not only to the minister, but to all.

"No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hope or worldly fear,
If life so soon is gone!"

Thank God that there is a remedy for this.

"Jesus, Thy blood, Thy blood alone
Hath power sufficient to atone;
Thy blood can make us white as snow,
No Jewish types could cleanse us so."

—Bp. Hamline.

A LITTLE BIRD'S SERMON TO A SERMON-MAKER.

I WAS in the act of kneeling down before the Lord my God, when a little bird, in the lightest, freest humour, came and perched near my window, and thus preached to me, all the while hopping about from spray to spray: "O thou grave man, look on me, and learn something; if not the deepest lesson, then a true one. Thy God made me, and the like of me; and if thou canst conceive it, loves me and cares for me. *Thou* studiest Him in great problems, which oppress and confound thee; thou lovest sight of one-half of His ways. Learn to see thy God, not in great mysteries only, but in me also. His burden on me is light, His yoke on me is easy; but thou makest burdens and yokes for thyself which are very grievous to be borne. I advise thee not only to see God in little things; but to see little, cheerful, sportive things in God, as well as great, solemn, awful things. Things deep as hell, and high as heaven, thou considerest over much; but thou dost not 'consider the lilies' sufficiently. Every priest should put by his awful robes, &c., &c., sometimes, and go free. If *thou* couldst be as a lily before God for at least one hour in the twenty-four it would do thee good; I mean if thou couldst cease to will and to think, and *be* only. Consider, the lily is as really from God as thou art, and is a figure of something *in Him*, the like of which should also be *in thee*. Thou longest to grow, but the lily grows without longing; yes, without either thinking or willing, *grows*, and *is* beautiful both to God and man. Think of that."—*J. Pulsford.*

Pulpit Illustrations.

LOT'S WIFE.

LOT'S wife had many privileges, but she perished. Lot's wife had a godly husband, but she perished. Lot's wife had been often prayed for, but she perished. Lot's wife had a good example set her, but she perished. Lot's wife had been warned by God, but she perished. Lot's wife saw her danger, but she perished. Lot's wife was led by the angels out of Sodom, but she perished. Lot's wife was nearly saved, but she perished. Lot's wife only looked round, and she was damned for the look. She lingered when she should have made haste, and God left her. Mercy drew her, but she grieved Mercy, and Mercy forsook her. Where Mercy left her, Justice found her, and Destruction seized her. She loved Sodom, and would love Sodom, and God gave her her bad love to the full. The Lord took her out of Sodom, but she took Sodom, out of Sodom, with her. "Let me get a last look at my idol," she said; and she got a last look with a vengeance. "She is joined to her idols," said the jealous God: "let her alone;" and she was let terribly alone—she became a pillar of salt. Sodom was more to her than her daughters, her husband, her soul, or God. In judgment she was wedded to her evil choice. She entered eternity in fellowship with those that suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.—*Matheson.*

THE WORLD UNSATISFYING.

"Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity."—*ECCL.ES. xii. 8.* It is recorded in Colton's "Lacon," that John Maddocks and Henry Quin, Esquires, the former in the clear, unincumbered possession of £6,000 per annum, and both in full possession of health as well as competence, destroyed themselves for no other reason but because they were tired of the unvaried repetitions and insipid amusements of life.

A similar instance is related in the *Memoirs of Lord Peterborough*. A young nobleman, blessed with health, riches, and a cultivated mind, terminated his own life because he was weary of existence.

BUILDING ON THE SAND.

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."—*MATT. vii. 27.*

A TRAVELLER writes :—" It so happened that we were to witness one of the greatest calamities that have occurred in Egypt in the recollection of anyone living. The Nile rose this season three feet and a half above the highest mark left by the former inundation, with uncommon rapidity, and carried off several villages and some hundreds of their inhabitants. I never saw any picture that could give a more correct idea of the deluge than the valley of the Nile in this season. The Arabs had expected an extraordinary inundation this year, in consequence of the scarcity of water the preceding year; but they did not apprehend it would rise to such an height. They generally erect fences of earth and reeds round their villages, to keep the water from their houses; but the force of this inundation baffled all their efforts. Their cottages, being built of earth, could not stand one instant against the current; and no sooner did the water reach them than it levelled them with the ground. The rapid stream carried off all that was before it; men, women, children, cattle, corn—everything was washed away in an instant, and left the place where the village stood without anything to indicate that there had ever been a house on the spot."

COMFORT AND COUNSEL.

GRACE, mercy, and peace be with you. I am well, and I verily count more of the sufferings of my Lord than of this world's lustre and over-gilded glory. I dare not say but my Lord hath fully recompensed my sadness with His joys, my losses with His own presence. I find it a sweet and rich thing to exchange my sorrows with Christ's joys; my afflictions with that sweet peace I have with Himself. Go on, my dear brother, in the strength of the Lord; put Christ's love to the trial, and put upon it burdens, and then it will appear love indeed. We employ not His love, and therefore we know it not. Let us be faithful, and care for our own part, which is to do and suffer for Him; and lay Christ's part on Himself, and leave it there. Duties are ours, events are God's. When our faith goeth to

meddle with events, and to question God's providence, and beginneth to say, "How wilt thou do this and that?" we lose ground. We have nothing to do there. It is our part to let the Almighty exercise His own office.—*S. Rutherford.*

THE CLEARING OF THE CLOUDS.

THERE is nothing in what has befallen, or befalls you, my friends, which justifies impatience or peevishness. God is inscrutable, but not wrong. Remember, if the cloud is over you, that there is a bright light always on the other side; also, that the time is coming, either in this world or the next, when that cloud will be swept away, and the fulness of God's light and wisdom poured around you. Everything which has befallen you, whatever sorrow your heart bleeds with, whatever pain you suffer—nothing is wanting but to see the light that actually exists, waiting to be revealed, and you will be satisfied. If your life is dark, then walk by faith, and God is pledged to keep you as safe as if you could understand everything. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

A WORD IN SEASON.

"A word spoken in due season, how good is it!"—*PROV. xv. 23.*

A RETIRED naval officer was once travelling by rail in Lancashire; when the train stopped at some station, a number of cattle-dealers and drovers entered the carriage. They had just returned from a fair, and all appeared excited. It was soon evident that one of the company was being made a laughing-stock by the rest; and at last he became irritated, and uttered an oath. The officer put his hand gently on his shoulder, and said, "Sir, you must not swear." The man looked at him, and said, "And pray, who made you, sir, a conductor over this carriage?" "Oh, no one," replied the officer; "but I am your friend, and you will say so before night." "Indeed, but I won't," retorted the angry man; and after a brief silence, he added, "There's many a bad one that goes to meetings." "Too true," replied the officer; "but there's never a swearer that goes to heaven." This caused deep thought, and little more was said; but when the train stopped, the man, much softened, took the officer by the hand, and with real feeling, said, "I don't love ye the less for what ye said to me." "A word spoken in due season, how good is it!"



THE LAY PREACHER.

Decay of Pulpit Power.

ITS CAUSES AND REMEDIES.

E propose devoting two or three papers to the consideration of this subject.

In speaking of the *causes* of the decay of pulpit power, it may be well at the outset to recognise the fact that this decay must not be attributed to any change in the essential elements of the Gospel, or to any revolution in the natural condition of human nature, or to the deterioration of talent on the part of preachers, or to any alteration of the terms on which God renders help to His servants in their work.

In these respects the former times were not better than these. In many things the present is far in advance of the past: in the spread of education and of intelligence; in the increase of places of worship and congregations; in the number of human helps for the discharge of pulpit duties. Yet with all the superior advantages of the present over the past, we are reminded of the fact that the power of the pulpit, both in the regular ministry and the laity, is not what it was fifty or sixty years ago. The old, whose memories are fresh in things of those days, mourn over it; and the young, who read and hear of those glorious times of Gospel grace, speak of the obvious difference.

Wherefore is this so? Two sources supply the causes. We do not find them exclusively in the pulpit; nor do

we find them exclusively in the pew. Both are to blame in this matter.

I. WHAT ARE THE CAUSES IN THE PULPIT?

1. *Decay of piety.* As we read over the lives of preachers in the last generation, and call to mind the characters of many who we knew in our earlier years, and then look at the lives of the present, we cannot refrain the conclusion that in piety there is a serious decline. Where is the self-denial, the closet-devotion, the entire consecration, the flaming zeal, the perfect love, of the ministry of former times? Is there not now a secularity of thought and pursuit; a worldliness of spirit and conversation; a love of pleasure and ease; a conformity to social customs and habits; a perfunctory and see-saw performance of duty; an aiming at the intellectual, grand, and beautiful: all of which augurs a decay in true spirituality of soul, and which, as a consequence, results in a decay of pulpit power.

How can a preacher who has not carried his religion with him during the week into his various engagements, so carry it with him into the pulpit on Sunday, as to command power from it in preaching to the people? If he has been worldly or secular during the week, how can he be much better on the Sabbath? If the cold, damp, freezing influences of the world have been allowed to permeate his nature for six days, how can it be that on the seventh he should be on a blaze with fire from heaven? But the preacher who lives in piety all the week, as God bids him, doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus: whether he eat, drink, or whatsoever he do, do it to the glory of God, will be as ready, in a spiritual sense, for the pulpit on the Sabbath, as though he had been in retirement, and his preaching will suffer nothing from weakness of soul before God. It is the spirit of the world, possessing the ministry to such an extent, leading it to run too much in the wake of the world, that acts as a mighty cause in the decay of its piety.

In speaking to this point in reference to the stated ministry, an American writer has some very pertinent and truthful remarks, which are as applicable to the ministry in England as in America. He thinks that the way in which young men are trained for the pulpit has a

great deal to do with affecting their power. "Formerly, a young man, looking to the sacred office, was fitted for college in the family of a pastor; and when he was graduated, he studied theology in the family of a pastor; and thus, in the whole process of training, he was in a situation eminently favourable for growth in piety, and for cultivating an experimental acquaintance with the spirit and design of the sacred work for which he was preparing. How different from this is the modern mode of preparation for the ministry! From eight to ten years or more are spent, first in an academy or high school, then in college, and finally in a theological seminary; and all this time the youthful candidate is kept under a constant pressure of classical studies, of intellectual gymnastics and strife for the mastery; and if by this process his piety be not wholly exsiccated, chilled, and dwarfed so as never after to recover its tone and vigour, it must be owing to other and better influences than any he is likely to feel while passing through the ordeal of his preparatory training.

"Let it not be thought that I undervalue theological seminaries, or a high standard of classical attainment; I speak simply of the present mode of preparing for the ministry as tending to cultivate the intellect rather than the heart, to raise the standard of scholarship at the expense of piety, of humble, earnest, self-devoted godliness; and just so far as this is the case, it operates to diminish the power of the pulpit, to make preaching literary and scholarlike rather than evangelical and searching, to fit it for a display of talent and learning rather than for a direct and faithful commending of God's truth to the heart and conscience. And is it not just here that we find a cause, if not a principal cause, of the ineffectiveness of much of the preaching in our day. Does it not savour more of the school of Gamaliel than of Christ; more of the high literary culture than of a deep, mellow-toned piety; figuring more in that excellency of speech and of wisdom, which Paul abjured when he went to preach the Gospel at Corinth, than in those elements of the doctrine of Christ crucified, which he determined to make the burden of his ministry? The pulpit is, no doubt, more learned and tasteful and accomplished than formerly; but is it not less bold, direct, and home in its

dealings with the souls of men? Its topics are more multiform and varied, but are they not less fraught with evangelical truth and doctrine; discussed more elegantly, but less impressively; in a style more elaborate and finished, but less suited to reach the conscience, and stir the deep springs of feeling and action in the inner man.

"Instead of coming right out in the strength of God, with the naked sword of the Spirit, to do battle with sin and error, it is too common with the preaching of our day to study to be ingenious, original, elegant, to make literary sermons, great sermons, popular sermons, as one says. To this end, instead of confining itself within its proper commission, that of delivering God's message in God's way, it ranges abroad over creation to find novel and strange subjects; and then it seeks to handle them in a new and original way, decking them out in tropes, and figures, and all fine things, just suited to make the whole exhibition elegant and popular, it may be, but ineffectual and powerless as to all spiritual impression.

"Preaching often fails of effect because it does not aim at effect. It stops in itself, or is satisfied with doing its task, with making a sermon and delivering it without aiming so to construct, to point, and push it home as to make it felt by the hearer.

"It is not enough addressed to man as man, to man in his everyday walks and wants as related to God and eternity. It has not enough of the lawyer-like element in it, which, having stated its case to the jury, bends all its energies to get it. It is too abstract, too artificial, too much in the form of an essay or dissertation, stopping with the proof, but not applying what has been proved.

"This is like preparing a medicine without administering it; or like planting a battery and fixing the guns, and then spiking them, lest, by letting them off, they should do execution in the ranks of the enemy."

2. Another cause which tends to the decay of pulpit power is a dilution and covering of the truth of the Gospel. We do not say that the truth is not preached; but that it is so attenuated, explained, "served up," and "handed out," that its powerful effects are not felt and its intrinsic glory discerned. It may be the water of life, but so mixed with artificial sweets that its invigorating

properties are neutralised. It may be the marrow of the truth, but so accompanied with human condiments that its nutritive elements are virtually destroyed. It may be, as one says, the sword of the Spirit still, but so muffled up and decked out with flowers and ribbons, as no longer to show what it is or for what purpose it is used.

This is done so as to make the truth more pleasing ; but the result is to make it less effectual. The desire of the preacher is to avoid giving offence, but it is at the sacrifice of his hearers' spiritual life and health ; as that physician who from a fear of nausea or displeasure in his patient should so dilute and mix his medicine, as to prevent it healing him of his sickness. The word of God is given to the preacher to proclaim in its purity, simplicity, and intrinsic power. And he who takes upon him so to cut and form, so to mix and dilute, so to decorate and beautify it, as to rob it of its edge, point, and power, takes upon him a responsibility of the gravest kind. If in thus preparing and preaching he handle the Word of God deceitfully, and present the enticing words of man's wisdom, he must not wonder that his preaching is nothing more than the music of an instrument which may stupify or sooth, please or tickle, but never awaken the conscience and convert the soul. If the "Thus saith the Lord" is so modified as to amount to no more than "Thus saith the preacher," is it difficult to ascertain the reason for a decline in the preacher's power to do good ? In so far as God's word in the hands of the preacher is less positive, direct, simple, than it has been given by Himself, so far we may expect it to fail in power. God's word is *a hammer* ; if, instead of applying it directly to the hard heart, the preacher adorn it with flowers and flourish it in the air, where will be its power ? God's word is *a sword* ; if, instead of using it to divide asunder the soul and the spirit and to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, the preacher occupy his time in discoursing about its sharpness, its brightness, its weight, its composition, and showing how clever he is in his manœuvres and exercises with it, where will be its power to fight the Lord's battles ? God's word is *light* ; if, instead of causing it to shine directly upon the dark mind, the preacher philosophise about its reflections, refractions, beauties, properties,

and take photographs, where will be its power to disperse gloom, and show the sinner the way to salvation and heaven?

3. Another cause of decay in pulpit power is the omission of the cardinal truths of the Gospel; or, the exposition and application of them in such a way as to render them ineffective in accomplishing the end of preaching. Take the preaching of the prophets, or of the apostles, or of the reformers, or of the evangelists of the eighteenth century, and observe the chief subjects of their sermons. Man's ruin through sin, and his restoration by Christ, with the duties and privileges immediately associated therewith, were the themes of their preaching. And they so preached them that no hearer could fail to see that *he* was the man ruined, and that *he* was the man that might be saved. They seemed to have no second idea. It mattered not where and to whom they preached, they varied not from these old soul-saving subjects. The university student, as the man just taken from the field, alike thundered out, "Repent ye and believe the Gospel." The burden of the Lord was the same on the souls of every grade of preachers. They had no idea of asking the people what they would *like*, of smoothing the truth down to human feelings, or shaping it to human moulds of thought and tastes. They took the awful and glorious truths of God, and poured them out of their red-hot souls upon the frozen hearts of their hearers, leaving them to burn, or scorch, or heal, or comfort, or teach, according to the necessities of the case.

And what the results of their preaching were we need not stay one moment to describe.

But what are the facts of the case now? We have essays instead of sermons. We have them read or repeated instead of *preached*. We have science rather than Christianity, morality in the place of the Gospel, reason in lieu of faith, living according to Socrates or Plato in preference to Jesus Christ. The crucifix, the confessional, sacramental efficacy, water regeneration, the bishop's confirmation, genuflections in worship, with such like, are preached in many Protestant pulpits, rather than *repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*. Others select as their topics and the manner of treating them such as suit their own predilections, feelings, education,

irrespective of the wants and demands of the people. Others again consult the well-known tastes, habits, business, family associations of certain hearers, and select themes which will not come in collision with them, irrespective of what is their duty and responsibility before God and in relation to every soul.

Hence it is that we have so much prettiness, weakness, humanness, namby-pambyness, wish-washyness, twaddle and nonsense, which is neither fit for pulpit or pew, for school or chapel, for body or soul. Can we wonder at decay in pulpit power? Can the deep darkness of human nature be illuminated with the pyrotechnics of scholarship? Can the callous heart of the sinner be penetrated or broken with a feather? Can the diseased man know his disease and the way of a cure by hearing harangues about astronomy or politics? "Strongholds" cannot be blown down with pop-guns, or "principalities and powers" conquered by Dutch toy soldiers. If a man shoot at the stars, how can he hit those who are around him on the earth? The remedies for man's salvation are prescribed by Divine wisdom, and any other are ineffectual and useless. The doctrines of grace, as they are called, are the true elements of power in the pulpit; and that power lies in them and grows out of them, and no preaching can last long or be truly effective in awakening or saving men which ignores these doctrines, or allows them only an occasional or secondary place in its ministrations. The only way to meet the souls of men effectively is with God's truth, and the pulpit would be powerless, though filled with an angel, if he substituted for that truth speculations and fancies of his own.

These are some of the causes of decay in pulpit power, so far as *the pulpit* itself is concerned.

The causes relating to the pew will be noticed in a subsequent number.

Biblical and Theological Themes.

THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

WHEN we examine the evidences which prove the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, we do not find it necessary to establish the fact of *His* personality, for that is not denied. Everyone admits that *He* is a Person; so that the main question on the subject is, Whether He be a Person *truly Divine* as well as human.

But when we proceed to an inquiry concerning the Holy Spirit, we are often met with the objection that He is not a Divine Person, but only a Divine *quality, energy, or mode of operation*. We are therefore compelled to open our investigation of this subject with remarks on the nature and proofs of the Holy Spirit's personality.

I. The *nature* of the Holy Spirit's personality. What is a person? A person is one who possesses personal qualities. But what are personal properties? Such as indicate the possession of mind or intelligence. A person is an intelligent agent. "That which can construct," says Dr. Paley, "which can design, must be a person. These capacities constitute personality, for they imply consciousness and thought. They require that which can perceive an end or purpose, as well as the power of providing means, and of directing them to their end. They require a centre in which perceptions unite, and from which volitions flow, which is mind. The acts of a mind prove the existence of a mind, and in whatever a mind resides is a person. The seat of intellect is a person." Consistently with these well-weighed definitions—though we still feel and acknowledge the imperfection of human language—we affirm that the Holy Spirit is a Person.

II. The proofs of the Holy Spirit's personality may be conveniently arranged under these comprehensive divisions:—*Personal qualities, personal acts, and personal designations* are all ascribed to Him.

1. *Personal qualities* are ascribed to Him.

Active intelligence is a prime, personal quality. But this appertains to the Holy Spirit. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God knoweth them. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12. Thus it is proved, as before asserted, that God hath revealed

them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things," or the depths, "of God." 1 Cor. ii. 10.

Volition is another personal quality, which is also attributed to the Holy Spirit. "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." 1 Cor. xii. 11. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us"—who certainly were persons, exercising their volition under the Spirit's direction—"to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." Acts xv. 28.

Capabilities, which can properly belong only to a person, are assigned to the Holy Spirit. Thus He is said to be resisted. "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." Acts vii. 51. To be *vexed* and *grieved*. "They rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit." Isa. lxiii. 10. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Eph. iv. 30. To be blasphemed against. "The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men; whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him." Matt. xii. 31, 32. To be lied to. "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" Acts v. 3. To be tempted. "How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord." Acts v. 9. And other such like things, of which a person can alone be capable.

2. *Personal acts* are ascribed to the Holy Spirit, such as—

Hearing and receiving: "Whatsoever He (the Spirit of truth) shall hear, that shall He speak: He shall receive of Mine." John xvi. 13, 14.

Speaking, testifying, showing, teaching. "That shall He speak," as just quoted. "The Spirit of truth shall testify of Me." John xv. 26. "He will show you things to come." "He shall take of Mine, and show it unto you." John xvi. 13-15. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." John xiv. 26.

Calling and sending forth messengers. "The Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Selucia."

Commanding, forbidding, suffering. "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul," as before. "They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia." "They assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not." Acts xvi. 6, 7.

Distributing gifts. 1 Cor. xii. 7-11. *Convincing, sealing, sanctifying*. "He will reprove," or convince the "world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John xvi. 8. "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." "Ye are sanctified by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11, who is thence especially

called "Holy," not only as supremely so in Himself, but as so in His office and gifts.

3. *Personal designations* are given to the Holy Spirit. For example, the masculine personal pronoun *He* is assigned to Him, though the word translated "Spirit" is in the neuter gender.

But not to depend on grammatical construction merely, the title *Comforter* is so given to Him as to bring Him into comparison with Christ, who is acknowledged to be a Person: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you *another* Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth." John xiv. 16, 17. Accordingly, *He* is repeatedly designated in that same discourse by the masculine pronoun.

1. The several passages in which the Holy Trinity is mentioned, and in which the Spirit is associated with the Father and the Son, who are certainly Persons, are themselves abundant proofs of the Spirit's personality.

2. If it be objected that things, not real persons, are sometimes personified, we admit the fact; but we plead that such cases occur in the use of figurative language which cannot be misunderstood, and that they do apply in the use of such plain language as the Scriptures employ in their simplest instructions concerning the Holy Spirit. If that language do not express proper personality, it is impossible that proper personality should be expressed in any human language.

3. Sometimes it may be said the word "Spirit" is used when personality cannot be immediately intended. This is true. The word "Spirit" is sometimes used for the gifts or communications of the Spirit; the name of the *cause* is applied to the *effects* which flow from that cause. But this does not in the least impair the proofs which we have advanced. When the word "Spirit" is employed to denote the gifts of the Spirit, that meaning is easily ascertainable from the context.

DR. HANNAH.



GOD AND THE SOUL.—Labour that thy soul may answer all the relations wherein it stands to God, by cleaving to Him—1. As a Father, by trusting on His care. 2. As a Teacher, by following His direction. 3. As a Creator, by dependence on Him. 4. As a Husband, by inseparable affection of love to Him. 5. As a Lord, by obedience to Him.

Expositions of some of the shorter Psalms.

BY THE REV. THORNLEY SMITH.

PSALM XIV.

THIS Psalm occurs again, with some variations, as Psalm liii. Here the word Jehovah is found, but there God, or Elohim, takes its place; and there are other differences in verses 5 and 6. It is probable that this is the original version of the Psalm, of which David was the author; but that at a later period some other writer adopted it, and made these alterations in it to suit the circumstances of the times.

The Psalm contains no formal divisions, but is an outburst of indignation against the workers of iniquity, but with the assurance that they would be made to tremble before the power of Jehovah. It depicts the character of fools; it describes God's observation of them; and it contains the reflections of the writer in reference to the issue.

I. THE CHARACTER OF THE FOOL. Verse 1. The word here used is Nabal, which was the name of one of whom it was said, "A fool is his name, and folly is in him" (1 Sam. xxv. 25). Isaiah describes a nabal as an evil person who will speak villany (xxxii. 6), or "a simpleton who speaks simpleness," and such a man is therefore empty, hollow, and devoid of mind. He has reached the climax of imbecility, for—

1. He says in his heart, *There is no God*. Professedly he is an Atheist; but this is not so much the conviction of his mind, as it is the object of his desire. "He saith it," says Lord Bacon, "by rote to himself, as that he would have it, for none deny that there is a God but those for whom it maketh that there were no God." There may be honest doubts on some questions in theology, but can there be on the question, *Is there a great first cause?*—a personal God who created all things, and by whom all things are sustained? "I had rather believe," says Lord Bacon again, "all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than believe that this universal frame is without a mind." Men there are who have reasoned themselves into speculative Atheism; but their Atheism is not so much their creed as their wish; they say, "There is no God," because they want to do without one. Are they not indeed fools?—fools for saying it, and fools for wishing it true? They are fools for saying it, for how do they know that there is no God? The evidences of the fact which they reject satisfies the minds of the great majority of mankind; and for anything they know, there may be other worlds and other states of being,

in which the evidence is still more conclusive. Have they visited every world, and searched the bounds of space, so that they can positively affirm that there is no God anywhere because they do not see Him here? They are fools for wishing it, for what would the world be without God? and where would all men's hopes lie for the future, either in this life or in the life to come? Without God—without a great, superior, leading mind to direct the affairs of its inhabitants—the world would soon become a scene of universal anarchy and confusion, nor would there be the slightest hope of a better world when this life has passed away.

2. The fool is *corrupt and abominable*. But the Psalmist speaks in the plural here, so that he means, they are corrupt who are of the fool's opinion. Men who deny the existence of a personal God are for the most part in the extreme of depravity, and all who love their society, even if they do not accept their theory, are almost equally the objects of God's abhorrence. Atheism generally leads to licentiousness, for when men say, and bring themselves to believe, that there is no God, they will not brook the restraints even of human government; but will often violate all law, and set all moral precepts at defiance. Who are the wildest anarchists of the present day but those who say, "There is no God?" As for *doing good*, for benefiting their fellow-creatures, for advancing the highest interests of society, they seldom or ever think of it. It is not in them to do good, for the great principle which should lead to it—love—is wanting; and to do mischief seems to be the object for which they live.

II. THE OBSERVATION OF JEHOVAH. Verses 2-4. He looked down from heaven. Mark—

1. *The manner* of His observation. The word here used signifies, to look closely by bending one's self forward (2 Kings ix. 20), and it implies that from His throne on high God bends down to observe the inhabitants of the earth, as He did before the flood (Gen. vi. 12), and as He did when men were erecting the tower of Babel (Gen. xi. 5). There are some who, if they do not say there is no God, yet do say there is no God to see, to take notice, to discern; but the Psalmist says there is, and that the Creator of men is the all-seeing Observer of men. He is, indeed, in heaven, far above out of our sight: but thence His piercing eye scrutinises the human race, and He bends forward to see, nor can any escape His notice or hide themselves from His all-searching gaze.

2. *The object*. God looked down to see, but to see what? To see if there were any that did understand and seek Him. Is there one, He asks, who shows discernment in thought and act,

and who is seeking after me that he may obtain My favour? It was a time of general corruption, like that before the deluge, when good men were scarce, and when Noah only and his family were found righteous before God. There have often been such times. There have been such in the world's history; there have been such in a nation's history; and it is probable there will be such again and yet again. But how sad a state of things must that be when God Himself has to search for good men, and can scarcely find them! Those who understand and seek God are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the conservators of society. If, then, in any locality, they are few in number, how deplorable must the consequences be! In the twelfth Psalm David deplors the fact, and says, "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men!" and a calamity so great may well cause the pious few the deepest anxiety and grief.

3. *The result.* The conclusion arrived at is this: "They are all gone aside," &c. "See," says Luther, "how many redundant words he uses that he may comprehend all men in the charge, and except none. First, he says *all*; afterwards, once and again, that there is not so much as one." This passage is quoted by St. Paul in Romans iii., to prove to the Jews, who acknowledged the authority of Scripture, the universal depravity of mankind. All, he says, are under sin, both Jews and Gentiles—"There is none that doeth good, no, not one." The Psalmist, then, is speaking of men in their fallen condition, and he affirms of them that, in the sight of God, none are righteous. Sin dwells in every breast; depravity is stamped on every heart; the feet of all are swift to shed blood. If, then, it were not for the intervention of God's mercy, what would be the result? A destruction more dire than that which fell upon the antediluvians must long since have taken place, and the world have been given up to utter ruin. But Christ interposes, and now, guilty as some men are, there is set before them a door of hope; and, by faith in Christ, they may obtain the righteousness of God.

In the fourth verse of the Psalm God Himself speaks, and says, "Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?" And it is implied that they have not, for what are they doing? "They are," He says, "eating up My people as they eat bread," &c.; and thus they have become like beasts of prey, proving that they have indeed no knowledge, and thus they have degenerated to the lowest depths. (See Isa. iii. 13, 14, and Micah iii. 1-3.) Such characters are to be found even in our day; men who prey upon God's people by making a profit of them, and who even persecute them as far as they dare, proving

that they would go further if they had the power. God's eye is upon such, and one day He will make inquisition for blood, and then, woe to those who have acted thus.

But, though it be true that the world is fallen—that both Jews and Gentiles are guilty before God: yet is there a remnant according to the election of grace; and even in the most degenerate times, as in those before the flood, in those of Sodom and Gomorrah, and in those of the prophet Elijah, there are some who are faithful witnesses of the truth, and are jealous of the honour of the Most High. Let us, therefore, be encouraged; but let us see that we are on the side of right, even though the masses of mankind are on that of wrong. For, observe—

III. THE PSALMIST'S REFLECTIONS ON these facts. He says, verses 5-7.

1. *The wicked are in fear.* There, in the very place where they have committed their crimes, terror overtakes them. He points to their punishment with His finger, and then marks its certainty. Men of the stoutest hearts often quiver before the manifestations of Jehovah's power. Whilst the day is fine and the sun of prosperity shines over their heads, they are bold and contumacious; but let the storm gather, let the thunder roll, let the lightning flash, and they tremble as a leaf, and seek some spot where they fancy they can be safe. There is a generation of the righteous among whom God appears, and who are held together by the abiding presence of His Holy Spirit. They are the chosen race who stand up against the spirit of the age, infidel and licentious as it is; and whilst oftentimes those who possess that spirit, the foolish and the wicked, are filled with fear, the righteous are preserved in calm and holy peace. It is when God comes out of His place to defend His people, that He at the same time visits His enemies in judgment, and then it is that their terrors are awakened and that all their self-confidence gives way. I grant that it is not always so in this world, for sometimes the wicked are so hardened that they will brave even death itself; but there is another day coming when God will appear in the generation of the righteous—even that great day when He will call to the judgment-seat all nations of the earth; and then, at least, will the stout hearts tremble, and then will the most obdurate quail before His presence. Mal. iii. 2; Rev. i. 7; xi. 15.

2. *The afflicted find a refuge in Jehovah.* Their counsels the wicked would try to put to shame, for they turn to ridicule every attempt made by God's servants to advance His glory. So doubtless it was in the days of the Psalmist, and so it is in the days in which we live. The world laughs at our Bible Societies, at our missionary operations, at all our plans for the evangeliza-

tion of mankind ; and it is glad if it can lay hold of arguments to prove that they are altogether unsuccessful. What then ? We are afflicted at all this, it is a grief and sorrow to us ; but Jehovah is our refuge, and our enemies shall not succeed. They shall not put down our efforts ; they shall not thwart our counsels and designs. We take shelter beneath the everlasting rock, and there we can bid defiance to our foes, and thence we can prosecute our enterprise in hope. As the refuge of His people God often appears in the Psalms ; and He is not less a refuge now than He was in the times of David, for in Christ He has provided for them a sure and certain hiding-place from every foe. Fly to Him, and you are safe. Trust in Him, and your defence is sure.

3. *The salvation of Israel comes out of Zion.* The Psalmist prays that it may, but in hope and confidence that it will. Ever must we remember that it is from Zion, and not from any other source, that deliverance must come. "Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains ; truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." Jer. iii. 23. God dwells in Zion, not by a visible symbol like the Shekinah, as in Zion of old, but by His Holy Spirit in the great temple of His Church ; and thence only can His people obtain succour in the time of their distress. Even from Zion itself help cannot come unless He impart it. The Church has no revenues of grace or blessing independent of her Head and Lord ; and therefore to look for deliverance from the calamities of the times in plans and devices of her own—in Church congresses, and councils, and conclaves, which I fear there is a strong disposition to do, is vain. Before any rich blessings descend upon us, any great revival of religion takes place, or any special manifestations of God's mercy are granted, we shall have to cease from man, to cease from ourselves, to cease from dependence on human appliances and schemes, for God will not give His glory even to His Church, but will require the Church to give all the glory to Him. It behoves every Christian man, then, to pray, "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion ;" and to lift his eyes to the everlasting hills whence it will flow in rich and mighty streams. Against the practical infidelity of the nineteenth century, against the sins and vices of our age and country, against all the abominations that are done in the earth, we must cry mightily to God for help, remembering that the help of man is vain.

4. *God's people will, in the end, rejoice.* "When Jehovah bringeth back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." This apparent reference to the captivity seems to imply either that this Psalm was not written by David,

or that these words were appended to it by a later hand. But the word rendered *captivity* means also *trial* or *misfortune*, and the phrase is used elsewhere to signify deliverance from trouble, as when it is said that the Lord turned again the captivity of Job (xiii. 10). We may then understand it as an expression of David's hope that a brighter day would dawn, and that God's people would again rejoice in the manifestations of His grace and love. And such is our hope as Christians. We may be tried, afflicted, oppressed, led, as it were, into captivity, and shut up in a dark prison-house, with but an occasional ray of light breaking through an aperture or chink ; but God will not forsake us, and ere long He will burst our bonds, as He did those of the Apostle Peter, and will free us from our adversaries, and put down Satan underneath our feet. And then shall we indeed rejoice ; then shall we be truly glad.

"Cometh sunshine after rain,
After mourning, joy again ;
After heavy, bitter grief,
Dawneth surely sweet relief."

So sang Paul Gerhard more than two hundred years ago ; and we may take up the strain with equal confidence, and wait as did God's servants then, and afterwards, until the day shall dawn and the shadows shall flee away.



Conscience as a Preacher.

A SERMON BY THE REV. H. B. HOOKER, D.D.

"At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist ; he is risen from the dead ; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him."—*MATT.* xiv. 1, 2.

THIS Herod resembled many other rulers, in that he was not the man to shrink from shedding innocent blood, when such an act would serve his purposes. A bold servant of God had rebuked him for a flagrant species of iniquity, and it resulted in that preacher's violent death, by Herod's order.

But in silencing one preacher, he has raised the voice of another ! Accusation of guilt and rebuke of it will not die with the Baptist's death. The very act of disposing by mur-

derous violence of one witness, brings up another more to be dreaded than the former.

The royal transgressor hears of the fame of Jesus. Strong things were reported of Him, which caught the attention of the monarch. His goodness suggested thoughts of the man he had slain. His miraculous power inspired awe; while both suggested that the man he had murdered had actually reappeared among men. Atrocious guilt is instinct with terrible suggestions. The alarmed monarch gave evidence of his fears by the language, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead!"

One preacher he had disposed of, but here is another. He had been troubled by the voice of the first. But he is terrified by the voice of the second. This preacher is CONSCIENCE.

There are so many references to this preacher in the Scriptures, and there are so many important considerations in regard to him, so deeply concerning us all, that I have chosen for my topic:

CONSCIENCE A PREACHER.

I. There can be no dispute that he is *lawfully in office*.

Much precious time has been spent, and much labour has been employed upon the question, who has, and who has not, a right to preach. But all the disputants harmonise in this case. No sect denies the validity of this preacher's ordination. Who that ever heard him has disbelieved that the consecrating hand of the King of the universe has been laid upon him.

II. He has been *long in office*. Without any reference to other worlds, and to beings existing before our race, of this we are certain—our first parents heard this preacher. They heard him when his voice was heavenly music. But they heard him, too, when every word was a dagger! Gaze on those haggard countenances, as the guilty pair depart from Eden! See those fast-flowing tears, listen to those sighs of anguish, and can you doubt who the preacher is, and what the theme of his discourse?

So early in our world's history was he a preacher. Nor has he for an hour ceased preaching since. Down through all ages has he held and magnified his office. Read the Old Testament. Read the New. Read the annals of all the nations.

How many, agonised with terror, or maddened with anguish, with all the violence of inherent hate, would have driven this preacher from his office! But he has kept it still. He has outlived all other preachers. All attempts of those, troubled by his voice, to hush it, have only given it the greater power. The preacher in Eden, near six thousand years ago, is a preacher still, as all our fallen race can testify.

III. This preacher never *lacks clearness or discrimination*.

As for clearness, his topics are few, dealing chiefly with

individual character. Having one object, and that of vast importance, he reaches it by the shortest and most direct path. There is no profusion of words, no mystical language, rendering the meaning doubtful, and bewildering the hearer. The pew need not ask what the preacher would be at. Every proposition is clear and well defined. The words often few—very few—often only: "Thou art the man!" That is enough.

And as for discrimination, this preacher always puts like and like together. He defines sharply, and no hearer fails to see the "difference between him that sweareth and him that feareth an oath." There is no twilight haziness, so that saint can hardly be distinguished from sinner.

Some preachers shoot at random, their missiles flying above, below, or on either side. If they hit at all, it is unexpected and surprising. But conscience never draws a bow at a venture—never misses his mark.

Some arrows, sharp enough in themselves, are so encumbered with feathers, they can never reach and pierce the mark. Some truths are so embellished with rhetorical beauties, or are frittered away by accompanying soft sayings, that they have no sharpness, and inflict no wound.

But here is an archer of another kind. Unerringly sure are all his arrows. With such a preacher in the pulpit, will any hearer doubt about the nature of sin, or be uncertain what holiness is, or be at a loss which of the two distinguishes his own character, or will he have any question what sort of an eternity these respective qualities will provide for their successors?

Discrimination in this preacher—did Herod doubt it when he thought John had risen from the dead? Ask Judas, as he rushes to suicide; or hearken to the trembling Felix!

IV. *Boldness* is another characteristic of this preacher.

There is preaching that takes its complexion from what is supposed to be sentiments in the pew, rather than from the known will of Him, who is higher than all the pews and pulpits in the universe. The Gospel harp must give only such sounds as shall please the hearers. The preaching is skilfully adapted to their known prejudices and tastes. The preacher would not for all the world break the skin by the flying bullet. The words are carefully chosen, the figures are beautiful, the rhetorical flourishes are admirable, the whole style and finish worthy of all praise.

But no heart is pierced and made to bleed. There is quietness unbroken in the pew, for the pulpit has been afraid to break the fatal charm. Man has stood in awe of man, and the sword of truth has failed to divide asunder the soul and the spirit.

But the preacher Conscience does a different work. He never asks who compose his audience, or what they are likely to think of his message. There is no compromise, no compliment; royalty cannot overawe him. The guilty David, the cruel Herod, the licentious Felix, shall each hear in his turn the message of God. The palace shall hear his voice, and the den of robbers, and the hall of revelry. Our preacher enters the theatre and the ball-room, and beauty has become pale in terror, and sinful mirth has been turned to anguish and tears, and all the charms of godless gaiety have withered, as this preacher has faithfully done the work given him to do. No presence has been more hateful to the ungodly but the bold artillerist lays on the match without shrinking, and it matters not who stands in the way of the shot.

V. An *awakening* preacher certainly is the one now described.

Much preaching fails here. Many preachers have no such aim as that of alarming and arousing their hearers. They are to deliver so much matter, occupy so much time, get through with so much service, and with this they are content, having no higher aim. They would be confounded were they to learn that some stray arrow from their bow had, with no intent of theirs, alarmed some slumbering sinner, and extorted the cry, "What shall I do to be saved?"

But the preacher I am now describing is a watchman that fails not of sounding an alarm in the ears of the workers of iniquity. He has this special work in hand, and most faithfully and most successfully does he do the work. The moment his voice is heard, all indifference and drowsiness vanish. His voice is loud enough to reach the most secret chambers of the soul. Men sleep under the voice of this preacher! Never. One of his mildest utterances thoroughly awakens, and when he speaks in the fulness of his power, it is as if every bone were breaking and every nerve were snapping!

This voice is louder than the din of business; overbears the music of sinful, worldly pleasures; starts out of indifference, and plunges into anguish, the careless lover of his sinful case. All ranks of fallen men, from the throne to the cottage, have had occasion to know something of this preacher's power to awaken and alarm.

VI. Our preacher preaches *everywhere*.

Other preachers usually have their stated places, but this one has no such limits. He does indeed lift up his voice in the sanctuary, but he can and does find a place to preach wherever can be found a human mind.

There goes a pouting, stubborn, rebellious child. But the

cloud on his brow is but an emblem of the gloom and self-reproach our preacher's voice is producing in that young but sinning heart. That young maiden's frantic love of the world, and that young man's love of guilty pleasure—how has our preacher made the folly and danger of each his text, and pierced the soul with his keen rebukes! In that parlour does he preach where domestic peace is broken by a fretful husband or an ill-tempered wife. He is down the fore-castle, making that wicked sailor tremble; but he also causes in the cabin the groans of the terror-smitten captain. And there is no dizzy height aloft to which the daring mariner can ascend beyond the reach of his voice.

He is shaking a hundred hearts with fear in that congregation. At the same time he has gone out with that Sabbath pleasure excursion, and is making sad one or more of those violators of law. In gloomy prison-cells abandoned men hear his voice; but so do villains of less lighter hue, whose midnight musings over their hard bargains with their victims have the unwelcome episode of his rebuke. While he thunders in the ear of the impious blasphemer, hast thou not heard him too, O disciple! who hast left thy first love, languished in prayer, and forgotten thy covenant vows?

In season and out of season he lifts up his unfaltering voice. In the house and by the way, in cellar, parlour, attic, palace, prison, he drives his work as a preacher of the truth of God. He is never weary, never frightened, never sick, never discouraged, never dies.

From other preachers men may flee. But who has so put ocean or continent between himself and this preacher as to be beyond his appeals? Let Jonah fly from duty, and hope the solitude of the sea may give him peace. But, alas for him! the preacher went in the same ship with the fugitive, and gave augmented terror to the storm. Let Peter retire from the presence of his injured Master, and from His rebuking eye; but his bitter tears show he has not escaped the voice of Conscience. Who can be a successful fugitive from that sermoniser whom God has stationed in the hidden chambers of the soul? Where has the flying footstep carried the guilty wretch and there has not gone with him this unrelenting, omnipresent accuser?

VII. And as for *effectiveness*, when has this preacher been surpassed?

I do not speak merely in regard to his power to alarm, filling the soul with remorse and terror.

But I speak of effectiveness, as respects the most precious and all-important results. David heard him, and there grew out of the hearing that most affecting proof of a broken and

contrite heart, the fifty-first Psalm. Peter heard him, and wept with repentance which was unto life. And three thousand sinners heard together the same sermon from him, and were so pricked in heart by it, that they bowed down in godly sorrow for their sins at the foot of the Cross.

And ever since those days has this great preacher been engaged in the same work. Direct, clear, discriminating, bold—who has preached to the purpose, if he has not done it? There has not been the human being effectually roused to a sense of his guilt and danger, and powerfully moved by the momentous interests of religion, but this preacher has been uttering his voice in the hidden chambers of his soul.

And has there ever passed into the realms of glory one who has not been indebted to this preacher's voice for that alarm which broke the slumber of guilt, and urged the soul to fly, with all haste, into the arms of Redeeming Love? Where would the redeemed have been had they never heard or heeded his voice?

VIII. Can any man deny that this is a *benevolent* preacher.

Searching, awakening, and alarming as he is, and when in full utterance producing unspeakable anguish; yet he alarms only that men may flee from threatening danger. He inflicts present anguish that men may be aroused to flee from that that never dies.

Did not God ordain this preacher, and give him a pulpit with reference to men's highest good? And has there ever been the human being that has hearkened to and obeyed this preacher, that has failed to call him benefactor? Can any lost sinner in perdition deny that, had he honestly and heartily obeyed these admonitions, he could have escaped the second death?

He alarms and gives anguish only because he must, that a more terrible evil, which his warnings foreshadow, may be escaped. And he ceases to alarm the danger by repentance and faith in the blood of the Lamb, then his voice becomes sweeter than any melody a created voice can pour into his ears.

IX. He will *never stop preaching*.

For one reason or another, it may be said of the Gospel minister, "He has preached his last sermon." Sometimes his own fault make it best he should never preach again; or growing infirmities, or that inexorable silence Death may interfere.

None of these agencies interrupt our preacher. We cannot say when he began; but we say he will have no *last* sermon. All who have heard from this side the grave, will as certainly hear him beyond it. For, on the one hand, he will certainly preach in heaven. As the ransomed of the Lord return and come to Zion, and are presented faultless before God, who doubts

that this preacher will be there in the full power of his benevolent office!

When dwellers on earth, in their folly and sin, and this preacher's voice was first heard, they hated both messenger and message, and escaped when they could. But when they were cleansed by atoning blood and renewed by the Holy Ghost, then they loved the preacher they had hated. Sweeter than all other music was his voice on earth. But what rapture in it now they are sinless in glory! Conscience preaching to a perfectly holy soul in heaven! There can be no sweeter music there, save the voice of the Lamb!

But he will preach elsewhere than in heaven. With what terrible earnestness he had rebuked men's guilt while they were on earth, and how faithfully he made the beacon-fires of alarm blaze all along the pathway of life! He pierced the soul with transient anguish that it might be saved from the worm that never dies. But men slighted the warning, and resisted and ill-treated the preacher.

But preacher and hearers have met again. He will preach, and they must hear. In the fulness of his power will he preach. In anguish beyond conception will they hear. And he will not stop. He will *never* stop.

In review it may be said—

1. That all other preaching can be effective only as it harmonises with that of this preacher. Other preachers must preach like him. They must utter the same great truths; they must utter them clearly, boldly, and with awakening power, or they cannot have the concurrence of this great preacher, and without it they can never save a soul. If they do not preach so as to have conscience to act with them, they will disturb no man's sinful peace, convict no man of his guilt, and send no man with a broken heart to the cross for salvation.

And it augments the responsibility of ministers of the Gospel that they, by their faithfulness, are the chief agents by whom the great preacher is furnished with his materials for awakening men to a sense of guilt and danger. Just in proportion as they clearly and forcibly describe the nature and perils of sin, the holy character and claims of God, the infinite excellence of Christ, and the momentous realities of eternity, in proportionable power does this preacher lift up his voice.

What an intensely interesting and responsible relation does the Gospel preacher bear to the one now described? His fidelity turns to highest account in furnishing conscience with that fearful and salutary power which it exerts over the soul and its endless destinies. Can any minister of the Gospel

fail, without guilt, to feel the force of such a motive to his own fidelity?

2. No question can be more important than, Whether the everlasting ministrations of this preacher shall be to us a blessing or a curse?

We shall furnish him with his topics. No man can escape this responsibility. Those texts on which he will preach will be taken out of the book that embraces the history of the heart and life. What but *their own guilt* gave this preacher such power, when our first parents heard him, and went weeping out of Paradise! What made a groundless fancy of Herod so full of terror, but his conscious wickedness! And what, but his own awful guilt, gave conscience such power over Judas, the betrayer of the Lord!

It is sin that arms him with such terrible eloquence. Were there no sin, he would have no power of harm. He drops all his power to make men miserable the moment they cease to sin. The moment one believes in Jesus, loving and trusting in Him, that moment he finds this preacher ministering joy unspeakable and full of glory. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now let him preach—what gladness in his words! What heavenly music in his voice! With what rapture he can fill the soul! The words of burning rebuke and terror are changed to words like the sweetest utterances of heaven.

And now, my hearers, your path of duty and safety needs not another ray of light to make it plainer. The preacher CONSCIENCE holds a relation to your souls of infinite moment! FOR EVER will he preach! FOR EVER will you hear! Indulged iniquity will give him power to make you miserable without end. A life of faith and holiness will make his ministrations a fountain of eternal joy!



GOD'S GREATNESS.—Think of His attributes and infinite excellencies. "God is in heaven, and thou art on earth, therefore let thy words be few." Eccles. v. 2. As God riseth in our thoughts, self falleth. That sun discovereth all our dust. Oh, how are we ashamed of our drops when we stand by this ocean! This serious apprehension of thy God will quicken thee to reverence.—*Swinmock.*

Materials for Sermons.

XXVIII.—MARTHA AND MARY.

LUKE x. 38-42; JOHN xi.; xii. 1-9.

THE two sisters, of whom we read in the above passages, have been the subjects of diversified observations and opinions. Some have thought that of the two, Martha was the more commendable and praiseworthy; others, that Martha was a worldly and irreligious character, altogether unconcerned about spiritual things; others, that both sisters stood on an equal footing of recognition and acceptance with the Saviour.

Without taking up any one of these opinions specifically for support or confutation, we shall state in a few words our views of these two female characters, and then proceed to illustrate them from the narratives.

Both were disciples of Jesus. Both loved Jesus, and Jesus loved Martha and Mary, as well as their brother Lazarus. But Martha was a disciple who had not fully attained to correct views of our Lord's person and work; whose love to Jesus was imperfect, and manifested in ways secular and subordinate: who was too much given to worldly cares and duties, and too little devoted to the interests of piety, as related to the Person, teachings, and spirit of her Lord. Mary, on the other hand, penetrated the veil of His humanity, and saw Him as Messiah and Christ; was drawn to Him as He who forgiveth iniquity, and teaches unto salvation. Hence her love works in ways corresponding with her views—in adoration, contemplation, humility, meekness, self-sacrifice; thus chiefly attending, as the "one thing needful," to the interests of her holiness as they revolved around Jesus, and for the promotion of which in every-one He came into the world.

These are the views we have of the two sisters. We will now proceed to illustrate them by reference to the evangelistic narratives.

I. MARTHA. Look at the account in Luke. She received Him into her house. Here was kindness, hospitality, and respect, all of which she could manifest as a friend, without believing in His Divinity and His Messiahship; as now there

are those in the religious world who pay all due respect, kindness, and hospitality to Christ in the persons of His ministers and in the things of His Church, without believing in Jesus with the heart unto salvation, and without being devoted to *Him* as their Lord and God.

The conduct of Martha, after she had received Him into her house, shows how narrow and imperfect her views of His character and mission were. Viewing Him only as a man-friend, to whom all possible attention and respect must be shown, she at once proceeds to act according to her views of Him and feelings towards Him—viz., to make a very extensive preparation for His *bodily* entertainment; so much so, that she becomes cumbered and careful about it. Her mind gets distracted, and spirit irritated, so that in a perturbed temper she comes to Jesus, and asks, “Dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me.”

Now we think that the whole of this procedure manifests an inner life towards Jesus low and earthly, resting on defective apprehensions of His Person and work as the Messiah and Saviour of men.

It is so in these days with the class of persons of whom we regard Martha as a type. Their procedure in reference to Christ in His ministers and in the things of the Church and religion seem to be based only upon conceptions of Him in an earthly nature and from earthly positions. Hence, in their service there are the cares, troubles, and irritations which are indigenous to earth and earth's associations. Their services so far as rendered are active, earnest, full, and in some respects perhaps more acceptable and praiseworthy, than some of those of whom Mary is a type; but they are only on a level with the earthward side of Christ and His interests. The pure, Divine love to their Saviour as such, and an adoring affection towards Him and confidence in Him, are, alas! too conspicuously wanting.

Jesus did not look at Himself as Martha did. He gently rebuked her for her spirit and conduct. And in this gentle rebuke, from such a Person, in such a place, and to such a disciple, with motives so respectful and hospitable in her behaviour, there is much more implied condemnatory than what appears. Jesus,

speaking to Martha from the perfect knowledge of His own character, says to her in effect, "Thou hast mistaken my Person and work. I have not come into thy house to eat and drink. My object is to do good. I go about for this. Now that I am here, My main business is to teach and save. One thing is needful; and Mary, understanding this, hath made choice of it, and is now sitting at My feet receiving it, and I cannot in consistency with My Person and work and her choice, bid her come and help thee in what I regard as unnecessary to the extent to which thou hast gone. If thou hadst understood Me properly, thou wouldest have known that the simplest dish would have sufficed for Me, and this could have been attended to without "care" and "trouble," and thou wouldest have had time to have sat at My feet to learn, which I should have been far more pleased with than to partake of all thy provision, and which would have been much better for the high interests of thy mind and heart. The things thou art "careful" and "troubled" about are unsatisfactory, fleeting, and perishable; but the good part which is obtained without care and trouble is soul-satisfying and indestructible."

It is very far from the point to meet this view by referring to ministers, or masters, or husbands not being pleased with the provision made for them when they need it, in consequence of the wives or servants being like Mary instead of like Martha. All this is looking at the matter from the mere human standpoint. Ministers, masters, husbands, &c. are not the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps if they were more *like* Him they would not require so much time, trouble, and expense for their entertainment on the part of those on whom it devolves.

"*Lord, dost Thou not care,*" &c. Upon this, Lange remarks, "The unfairness of Martha's conduct consists chiefly in her wishing to enlist the Lord on her side, in her strife with her sister. Mary had been probably lending her assistance to Martha in her household cares until the Lord's arrival; but perceiving that she could now use the precious opportunity more profitably, she had left her sister. Martha desires that the Lord should send her back to the post which she had left too soon, as she can dispense with her assistance no longer."

Look now at the account in the eleventh chapter of John. Doubtless the rebuke of Jesus to Martha, as recorded in Luke,

with perhaps other words which are not recorded, had a beneficial effect upon her mind, so that subsequently she was more correct in her life and belief. We make this supposition, because we think Martha appears to more advantage in John than she does in Luke, though we are far from thinking that in John she is in any way on a par with her sister. The chief particular in which she has made advance is in her belief respecting Jesus; but this probably was the utterance of an excited mind brought about by her brother's death and her Lord's teaching at the time. (See John xi. 25, 26.) Jesus said unto her, "I am the resurrection and the life," &c. "Believest thou this? She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." Here she awakes to a mental discernment of Christ's character for the time; but she does not act as though she realised its sacred import and obligation. For where is her adoration of Him, her devotion to Him in a *spiritual sense*? A short time after this confession she is found doubting the possibility of her brother's resurrection by Christ's power. "By this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days?" What had all this to do in the prevention of his resurrection by a power which was Divine? Her confidence as above quoted must have been only verbal, or when she uttered these last words she must have greatly changed or wavered in her faith.

II. Let us now look at the character of Mary as we see her in the narratives of the evangelists. Several divines, among whom are Jeremy Taylor and Isaac Williams, believe that this Mary is the same as Mary Magdalene, and the woman who was a sinner that bathed the Saviour's feet with her tears. And they adduce much that is plausible in support of their view; but we will not follow in their track, although to do so would greatly facilitate the realisation of our object. We prefer taking the Scripture passages, concerning which there are no doubts as to whether they refer to this Mary.

While Martha's devotion to our Lord seems to have rested upon her contemplation of Christ as a human Friend, and hence her "serving at the feast" (John xii.), and her being cumbered about much serving, and careful and troubled about many things in this direction—Mary's devotion to Christ seemed to rest on her contemplation of Him as her Divine

Friend, Teacher, and Lord; hence she is found at His feet, hearing His word, choosing the good part, the one thing needful, anointing His feet, worshipping. Mary had found that in Jesus was LIFE, from which He had communicated life to her own soul; and that He had power on earth to forgive sins, of which forgiveness He had made her the happy partaker. She had received much from Jesus as her Divine Master, and so she loved much, and showed her love in ways which accorded most with the nature of the blessings received, and with the mind of the gracious Benefactor.

There is not a single instance wherein it is plainly stated that Martha sat at the feet of Jesus. The only place which may be said to give the supposition that she did, is in Luke, who says that Martha received Him into her house, and she had "a sister called Mary, who ALSO sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word." But this word "also" may as well suggest that the part which Martha did on this occasion was to receive Him into her house, and Mary, her sister's part, was to sit at His feet and hear His word.

But not to insist upon this view, there is no positive statement that Martha did this either as a learner or as a worshipper. Whereas, in the case of Mary, whenever you read of her, it is stated as her peculiar act and character before her Lord, that she is found at His feet. In Luke's account she is said to be at His feet. In John's first mention of her, when she went to meet Jesus, she fell at His feet; and then, in his second mention of her, she is at His feet anointing them with a "pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly," and wiping them with the hair of her head.

Now, what does all this teach about Mary? Namely, that she possessed those tempers of soul—humility, adoration, sacrifice, subjection, love, faith, worship—which are inseparable from a correct view of Jesus and a correct conduct before Him. Where are the *signs* of similar tempers, exhibited in similar ways, in the character of Martha?

Then there is an apparent gentleness, meditateness, silence, pervading Mary in association with her Lord, becoming her views of Him, and her love to Him as God, contrasting obviously with the apparently loquacious, irritable, and anxious nature

of Martha, not inconsistent with her views of Him as a human friend.

The Rev. Isaac Williams, speaking of the two sisters as they appear in John, says:—"The difference between the two holy sisters on that occasion appears to consist in this—that while both loved Christ, Mary loved Him with an adoring love as God. Hence the difference of deportment between the two; Martha conversed *with* Christ, Mary fell at His feet. Both used the same words, for both said, 'If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.' With the weeping Mary, 'Jesus wept,' but said nothing. To Martha He said much, as if needing something yet lacking in her faith. She believed in Christ as of God, for she said, 'I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.' But this was not enough. She believed, too, in the general resurrection, for she said, 'I know my brother shall rise again at the last day.' But there was one thing yet needful in her faith, which the Lord would teach her. 'I am,' He says, as if unsatisfied with her present faith, 'I am the resurrection and the life; whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die. Believest thou this?' This it was that the good Martha lacked; this it was which Mary had found; that even in the present time, Christ is the resurrection and the life, by belief in His Godhead raising us up from this dying life to partake of His eternity. To lose one's dying self, like Mary, and to be found in Him, this is the one thing needful, the good part which shall not be taken away, the love that never faileth; to be risen again in Him 'who only hath immortality;' before whose coming and before whose face on the white throne the heavens and the earth even now fly away, and there is no place found for them."

In no single instance do we find Jesus rebuking Mary for her conduct towards Him. Martha would fain have had Him do so; so would Judas (John x. 11); but in neither case did He see with them and do as they wished. But, contrariwise, He rebuked Martha for not being more like Mary, and corrected Judas for his covetous and sordid interference with her loving and memorial anointing of Him.

We know it is said that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." But this does not support the theory that both sisters were equally devout and that Jesus loved both equally,

any more than the statement, "God loves all men" proves that all men love God, or that He loves all men with equal complacency and delight. And the fact that Martha's name stands first in order, says nothing more than that this was the method of Jewish writing, to place the name of the elder before the younger.

In reviewing the whole subject, there are several important lessons to be gathered for our instruction and edification.

1. That the *Divine* demands more than the *human*. This applies to Christ in His Person, and applies to all things. The human is only the medium, the instrument, the casket, the servant of the Divine. It does not, however, follow that the human must be neglected or ignored. Everything in its place.

2. That to receive the truth and drink in the spirit of purity, are superior to eating and drinking of the things that perish.

3. That the love and worship of Jesus as our God and Saviour are much more acceptable to Him than are all our cares and anxieties about the temporal things of the family or of the Church.

4. That Jesus will never rebuke a loving, holy, learning disciple at His feet.

5. That the follower who gives more attention to temporal things in serving Him than to spiritual, has need to be instructed more perfectly in the nature of true religion and of the claims of Jesus.

6. That the man who makes all things subservient to his love and worship of Jesus—business, time, friends, pleasures, eating, drinking—and can, as a "precious ointment very costly," give them all up to Him, is the man who has received the true idea of Christ, and entered into the realisation of His gracious will. To serve all things in Jesus, and Jesus in all things, is to make choice of the one thing needful, that good part which shall not be taken away from us.

THE EDITOR.

XXIX.—VENGEANCE A DIVINE PREROGATIVE.

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."—ROMANS xii. 19.

"DEARLY BELOVED;" feeling of universal brotherhood; no longer, to the converted Pharisee, was the Gentile "a dog," for the cross has submerged these ignoble distinctions. This term

expresses more than a close friendship, through a common Saviour; it is the introduction to a deep-felt, pastoral counsel.

"*Avenge not;*" *i.e.*, do not *you* take satisfaction for wrongs by inflicting punishment; for the individual, it is an officious and dangerous interference, and generally is a manifestation of a malignant heart. But the text does not mean that you must submit to wrong without seeking justice, but only seek it in a proper place; Paul appealed to Cæsar.

"*Rather give place unto wrath*" means, either give place to wrath of the enemy, or, as may be translated, "leave room for wrath," *i.e.*, "the wrath of God;" but the idea is one, by giving place to the wrath of the enemy you give room for the vengeance of the Almighty to follow. If you suffer an insult, and retaliate, the English law will not recognise the insult, but dismiss the case, because you have left no room for wrath—the wrath of the English law; just so in reference to Divine law.

"*For it is written*" (Deut. xxxii. 35). The inspiring Spirit often re-used His former utterances, shedding a brighter lustre on the old truth, which brought out a new phase of its meaning, or intensifying the old.

The truth our text seeks to enforce is, *Vengeance is a Divine prerogative*; exercised by the individual Christian it is a sad usurpation, rebounding on his soul with the force of self-injury, while to the Almighty it is a work peculiarly His own, and as such it is of certain and perfect execution.

I. VENGEANCE EXERCISED BY THE INDIVIDUAL IS A USURPATION SELF-INJURIOUS; hence the caution, "*Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath.*"

When a man attempts to avenge his own wrongs, he inevitably injures his own spirit. This Divine prohibition does not in any sense mean your wrongs shall go unrequited, but that your meddling in this matter is out of place; your attempt hurts you more than your enemy, while by your forbearance your enemy's punishment will grow the more severe.

1. *Revenge sours the human spirit, and begets a feeling opposed to the first principles of the Gospel.* If your injuries are as real as they seem, it is better bear them than incur the greatest injury of an embittered spirit, self-wounded and soured by the recoil of revenge.

2. *Revenge negatives, and eats up the good within; like rust in*

iron, it cankers its vengeful way inward; all that is heaven-born in the man seems to droop and wither before the blast of its look. A man in a passion, while he annoys others, hurts himself most, for while the fire of his passion apparently vents its force outward, leaving its author morally enfeebled, it is only accumulating to itself an intenser force, to rebound upon the heart from whence it started with a more terrific and self-destructive grip.

Practical teaching of text illustrates one of the noblest principles on which Christian character is built—self-conquest. It is grand to see a man triumphing over self when stung with a consciousness of injury, enduring rather than revenge. Plato, when His servant vexed him, lifted his arm to strike in revenge, but suddenly bethought, "I am in a passion," and kept his arm in that attitude for some time, when a friend, entering his room, asked what he was doing, and Plato replied, "I am punishing an angry man." If such men by force of moral courage only were able to hold such a conquerorship over self, how much more ought the Christian? God's word affords no refuge or excuse for spasmodic outbursts of passion, or secret slumberings of revenge. He promises not merely the moral courage of Plato, but infinitely more, Divine grace; and accompanying those promises of proffered strength, comes with its appeal to every conscience the words of the text, "Avenge not."

The text was spoken to Christians. Still need to reiterate the same admonition. If in church some brother wittingly or unwittingly oppose and repel you in your work, how apt is there to rise a desire to retaliate. But, brother, if your injuries are so painful as you conceive, learn to bear and to forbear.

3. *Revenge vexes the Holy Spirit.* Dwelling in the heart as in a temple, He seeks to work out in the believer's life and character, His own likeness. Revenge neutralizes His work and eventually drives Him hence.

4. *Revenge gives place to the devil, and allows the evil to conquer and trample on the good.*

5. *God forbids man usurping it.* "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear grudge."

6. *The Saviour's teaching prohibits it.* "I say, Love your enemies." He rebuked it in James and John when they would call fire from heaven.

7. *Revenge yielded to grows more revengeful*; it intensifies; like rolling streams, it gathers force and body as it sweeps along.

8. It follows, the man who entertains a feeling of revenge towards a fellow-man, punishes himself and not his enemy, from a Christian standpoint; can only touch enemy without self-injury by kindness; only thus "heap coals of fire on his head;" only then most God-like.

II. VENGEANCE IS PECULIARLY GOD'S WORK; "for it is written, Vengeance is mine."

1. This inspired *claim* of possession and of right excludes every other. It does not belong to the devil; within the limits of his chain he may usurp it, in its ungodly forms it may be characteristic of him. The ancients used to speak of it as the work of the evil deities. But Bible claims it for Jehovah only. To the sinner, it is a most terrible thought that his measure of punishment is not entrusted with some agent, who possibly might be bribed. The Lord's own hand shall requite: "*I will repay.*"

2. *Its character.* God's vengeance is perfect; no agitated, perturbed feeling, damaging Himself; but calm, just, exact visitation of punishment deserved. Found in the creature, it is a distorted and degraded feeling; found in the Creator, it is a majestic visitation of merited wrath upon the wrong doer. Text unfolds its character. "*I will repay*;" a literal repayment, not hap-hazard, but measure for measure. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." "He will reward every man *according* to his deeds."

3. *Its basis.* (a) The fact of a Divine and absolute sovereignty, "Saith the Lord;" and (b) on His unique character and office as Judge.

4. *Its reason,* "Is Mine." (a) By reason of that connecting link between wrong and punishment, which He created and rules. (b) His intense abhorrence of evil. His threatenings.

5. *Its proof.* Abel's blood cried for vengeance, not to Adam, but to Heaven. The blood of the souls 'neath the altar cry to Him, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood?" Universally the oppressed and down-trodden cast their wistful and instinctive glance to the skies for relief and revenge, for God has implanted in the human mind the conscious feeling that He is the Avenger of the

wronged and the helpless. Grasping this majestic thought, that vengeance is God's, and only His, will create in the believer an extensive dread of personal interference—avenging himself, and a firmer trust in the great Vindicator of the just.

III. AS VENGEANCE IS EMPHATICALLY A DIVINE WORK, IT IS OF UNFAILING EXECUTION. "I will repay, saith the Lord."

This certainty appears from—

1. The emphatic wording of the text, or may we say from the vow of the Deity, "*I will.*" Always His word standeth sure, and cannot be broken. Here it assumes its most solemn and imperative character—expressive of kingly authority. His purpose changeth not. Slowly a cloud of wrath seems to gather, and wicked strengthen each other; but "*I will,*" saith He who cannot lie—"the Lord."

2. The principles of His moral government necessitate it—exaltation of right, repression and punishment of wrong. "It is *Mine.*"

3. The fact that in this world God sometimes visits with His vengeance the wrong-doer, is a pledge of that sure and perfect punishment yet to come.

Lessons—

1. The danger and folly of personal revenge.

2. Supreme satisfaction for the Christian in all his injuries and wrongs.

3. Besides caution to the "dearly beloved" to avoid spirit of revenge, there is here a warning to wrong-doer. You touch God's child, He will avenge. "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore." "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."

J. BARKER.

GOD'S EXISTENCE.—He conceives not possibly how he that would believe in a divinity, if he had been at the creation of all things, should less believe it seeing the preservation of all things; for preservation is a creation—and more, it is a continued creation, and a creation every moment.—Herbert.

Open-air Services.

THE POWER OF FAITH.

"Only believe."—MARK iii. 36.

THESE words were uttered by our Lord at Capernaum, a city on the western shore of the Sea of Tiberias, on a very memorable occasion. "He was nigh unto the sea," having just crossed over in a ship; "and behold there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and when he saw Him he fell at His feet, and besought Him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death; I pray Thee come and lay Thy hands on her, that she may be healed, and she shall live." Those of you who have read the account, know how that a great crowd had gathered round our Lord as He was going to the ruler's house, which hindered Him much. In the crowd was "a woman which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment. For she said, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole." While this was going on, messengers came from the ruler's house, saying the child was dead. Our Lord then spoke these encouraging words to the father, "Be not afraid, only believe." The father did believe, and finally the child was restored to life again. We see—

I. *All men are by nature helpless, and ready to perish.*

Sin has made cruel sport of human nature, entering all homes, and throwing clouds of woe where rays of sunshine ought to burst. It entered paradise, and caused infinite pain and anguish. It from that time unhinged happiness; and dismay has fallen upon a guilty world. "In Adam we all die." Sickness and pain are now our lot; we all must mourn this terrible fact. It is sad to see human nature suffer, but how awful to think of its consequences, when often a fatal turn is taken, and the suffering one is no more. The question then arises about the soul.

II. *Christ is both able and willing to save men.*

Salvation like a river is ever rolling on, the true source being heavenly one; but its course earthly, running through all lands, and refreshing all countries. The woman in the crowd touched but the hem of Christ's garment, yet such power is there in Him, that it proved efficacious in healing her disease. He is able to save those who are afar off. It matters not how black a sinner, Christ can save the vilest of the vile. He saved Saul of Tarsus, the thief upon the cross, John Bunyan, and

others who were once notorious sinners. He is willing to save all men. For this very reason He suffered a cruel death upon the cross. He was mocked, and scourged, and wore a crown of thorns on His brow, all in order to save sinners. He gave His life a ransom for all; "for without the shedding of blood there is no remission." Sinners "are saved by His life," if saved at all, for as He lives now to intercede for them, so, when on earth, His presence was a guarantee of His ability and willingness to save.

III. *Faith is the golden means used whereby a sinner can be eternally saved.*

This exercise is truly simple, yet thousands never learn it. It is the A B C for the sinner that is willing to be saved.

The ruler in the text before us understood its powerful effects. So did the woman in the crowd. They both knew and believed that Jesus was the Christ, and that in Him was life. Hence their perseverance.

It is the door that opens into the gallery of Christian privileges, and on the walls are hung sweet mottoes like these—Remission of Sins (Acts x. 43); Justification (Rom. iii. 21, 22); Sanctification (Acts xv. 9); Spiritual Life and Light (John xii. 36; Gal. ii. 20); Eternal Life (John iii. 15); The Gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts xi. 15). Good works is sure to fail. Self-righteousness will not do.

IV. *The exercise of faith is necessary to salvation.*

The following anecdote beautifully illustrates the triumph of faith:—A military officer being in a dreadful storm, his lady, who was sitting in the cabin near him, and filled with alarm for the safety of the vessel, was so surprised at his composure, that she cried out, "My dear, are you not afraid? How is it possible you can be so calm in such a storm?" He arose from a chair lashed to the deck, and drew his sword. Pointing it to his wife's breast, he said, "Are you not afraid?" She instantly replied, "No, certainly not." "Why?" said the officer. "Because," rejoined the lady, "I know the sword is in the hand of my husband, and he loves me too well to hurt me." "Then," said he, "remember, I know in whom I have believed, and that He holds the winds in His fist, and the waters in the hollow of His hand." Thus Christ has become the "Daysman" between God and man. He has atoned for sin by the sacrifice of His own body on the cross. The sinner now must entirely depend upon the finished work of a crucified Saviour, and trust Him wholly for salvation.

V. *Anxious souls are exhorted to seek salvation.*

"Only believe." These two words are very simple, yet unfold life and salvation to dying men. Believe a risen Saviour,

who has triumphed over death and hell himself; believe a compassionate and tender fellow brother, "who was touched with a feeling of our infirmities." Yes, we can invite, urge, and warn the sinner in the face of this truth.

Illustrations, &c.

The valley of Achor is not without a door of hope. Hosea ii. 15.

Crosses are ladders that lead to heaven.

"Give a man luck, and throw him into the sea," is a saying of Fielding; and is applicable to a man having Christ, and being in the furnace of trial.

Immediately Adam received the penalty of his transgression, the Lord gave him the promise, "That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head," referring to Jesus Christ, who destroyed the power of Satan by dying on the cross.

JOHN ROBERTS.



Thoughts about Jesus.

BY A PREACHER.

HE who undertakes to save himself without Jesus, is like one who tries to live without food, and see without light; or like one who tries to find his way across a desert without a guide, a chart, a compass, or any knowledge of the way he should take. There is no Gospel salvation apart from Jesus. He saves only them that *come* to God by Him.

THE Jewish priests could not complete their work, because they passed away and were imperfect; but our Priest, Jesus, continuing ever, and having an unchangeable priesthood, and being the Son of God, is able to save unto PERFECTION and for EVERMORE. Blessed be His Name!

No one would speak lightly of Jesus, if they knew Him. Even the devils had nothing to say against His name or character. And why? Because, as they said, "*We know Thee who Thou art, THE HOLY ONE OF GOD.*"

THERE is no remorse like that which follows the betrayal of Christ. Judas, under its power, hanged himself. He who now

crucifies Him afresh, and puts Him to an open shame, is of all men most miserable; and though he may not hang himself, he *abandons* himself to all sorts of evil which is perhaps worse.

A BUILDING of wood, any more than a building of stone, cannot stand on nothing; neither can the faintest hope of heaven any more than the strongest rest on that *nothing* which is in man through sin. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

IF angels are commanded by the Father to worship Jesus, and it is proper for them to do so, how much more should I worship Him! If they sing His praise because of what He has done for me, how much more should I sing it myself! If they are His servants to do His will, is it not unpardonable ingratitude in me to refuse Him my service?

WHEN Jesus would show the greatness of His kingdom and its subjects, He took a little child, and placed it before His disciples, and said, "Of such is the kingdom of God." When we think of the *number* of little children in the universe, their *innocence* and *goodness*, and the *power* they exert (for what power is equal to that of little children?), is there any kingdom to equal the kingdom of Jesus?

As we see the wise men from the East bowing in adoration before the Child of Bethlehem, and presenting to Him their rich gifts, we may observe the homage and treasures which wisdom pays to innocence, simplicity, and love. A child is nearer God than a man, and therefore it is that humanity bends before it in its wisdom, and offers it presents.

HE who would command must himself obey; and his obedience shall be the command of example more than that of the mouth. The will exerted in submission to law has more power in commanding others than have words. Thus it was with Jesus; His life in its entirety was the surrender of His will in submission and obedience to another. "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." Hence His laws or commands are not felt to be arbitrary—the mere expression of will—but the laws of love and mercy, laws to which He Himself submitted. His commandments are not grievous, but joyous.

By being born in a stable Jesus showed that He will stoop to the poorest heart and the poorest circumstance, and then reveal *Himself* in His character as Saviour and Lord.

By being brought up in Nazareth He showed that it is possible for the people to live in the worst localities and companies if called to it, without yielding to sin and becoming like their wicked neighbours; as the sun can shine into houses and upon scenes of the vilest kind without its light or itself being contaminated.

Jesus by no means connived or winked at the woman's sin when He said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." He *pardoned*, and not condemned. This was what He came into the world for. Had He pardoned, and said to her, "Go, and sin again," or even said nothing to her as to the future, this may have been construed into a connivance. But He pardoned, and commanded her to sin *no more*, by which He showed mercy to the sinner, and abhorrence of the sin. The one He accepted; the other He renounced.

Pulpit Illustrations.

THE WRONG SIGNAL.

"WHAT has happened?" said Mr. Hamilton to his son, who entered the room in haste, and with the air of one who has some interesting news to communicate.

"A freight train has run off the track and killed a man," said Joseph.

"How did that happen?" said Mr. Hamilton.

"The watchman gave the wrong signal. The engineer said that if he had given the right signal, the accident would not have occurred."

Making the wrong signal cost a man his life. There is another sense in which wrong signals sometimes occasion the loss of life—of life spiritual. The preacher who fails to declare the way of salvation as it is laid down in God's Word, who teaches that all men shall be saved, or who teaches that men may secure salvation by their own works, gives the wrong signal. In consequence, men take the wrong tack, and go on to perdition.

' The private Christian, whose reputable standing in the Church and in society give influence to his example, pursues a course of conduct utterly inconsistent with the injunction, "Be not conformed to this world." The young Christian is led to practise a similar course; by degrees he loses his spirituality, and becomes one of those who have a name to live, but are dead. The holding out of the wrong signal led to the disaster.

A professing Christian exposes himself to temptation, and escapes unharmed. One of less power is led to follow his example, and falls into sin. To him, his predecessor had given the signal that there was no danger there. He gave the wrong signal.

We are constantly giving signals to our fellow-men—signals which will direct their journey to eternity. How careful should we be at all times to avoid giving the wrong signal!

THE CITIZENSHIP OF SAINTS.

"For our conversation is in heaven."—PHIL. iii. 20.

ON our *burgess-ship*, whiles we live by Heaven's laws, and go about our earthly businesses with heavenly minds. This a carnal man cannot skill of. A fly cannot make that of a flower that a bee can do. There is a generation whose names are written in the earth; these make earth their throne, heaven their footstool, and are loth to die because they have treasures in the field. But the saints, though their commoration be on earth, yet their conversation is in heaven; as the pearl grows in the sea, but shines as the sky; as stars, though seen sometimes in a puddle, yet have their situation in heaven; as a wise man may sport with children, but that is not his main business. Our bodies are on earth, our hearts in heaven (as His was that did even eat and drink and sleep eternal life). We live by the same laws as saints and angels in heaven do. If Satan offers us outward things in a temptation (as he did Luther a cardinalship), we send them away from whence they came, as Pelican sent back the silver bowl (which the bishop had sent him for a token) with this answer, "We are the citizens or inhabitants of Zurich; are twice a-year solemnly sworn to receive no gift from any foreign prince." So we, the citizens of heaven, are bound by a solemn and sacred covenant not to accept of Satan's cut-throat kindnesses.—*Trapp.*



THE LAY PREACHER.

Decay of Pulpit Power.

ITS CAUSES AND REMEDIES.

No. II.

THERE are, in connection with the pew, several things which combine to exert an influence prejudicial to the power of the pulpit. The people find fault with the preacher for not being what he was in former years, but it would be well for the people to ask how far they have contributed to this? There is little doubt that in many ways they have helped to bring about in the pulpit this decay of power of which they complain. We will specify a few.

1. *Building fine places of worship.* It may be difficult for some to see this, but let us look at the facts. Most men, in an ordinary house, will speak and feel much more simply, naturally, and confidently than they will in the drawing-room of a mansion. In the one they will feel at home, in the other they may be affected and reserved. It is thus with most preachers in respect to the plain places of worship of other times and the grand buildings which of late years have been built in our midst. Besides, when a family removes, through prosperity, from the old homestead of several generations, to one of large dimensions, imposing appearance, and beautiful situation, it must have everything to correspond, in furniture, in visitors, in

etiquette. Thus it is with a congregation when, through external prosperity, it goes up higher, from the building of the last century, in an alley or back street, to the noble, spired Gothic structure in the square, or at the corner of High-street and Queen's-road. The preaching which would do for them down there will not do for them up here. That plain English, that faithful application of truth, that earnest appeal to the conscience, were all very well when in the old chapel, but now these things must be modified and brought into agreement with the modern sanctuary; and so the preacher must no longer be John Brown, the shoemaker, or Thomas Smith, the stonemason, however holy and powerful; the preacher's education must be more classical, his appearance more respectable, his language less rugged, his application less pointed; in a word, there must be Gothic preaching as well as a Gothic chapel; showy sermons as well as a showy congregation; the stylish minister as well as the stylish people. Those direct and powerful appeals which stirred the conscience and heart to audible responses in the congregation must be subdued into a chasteness to accord with things around. Those revival scenes, which make sacred in recollection the old "house of God," must be restrained into "decorum and decency" (which means they must be given up) in "Trinity Church" or "St. Paul's Chapel." Are not these things so? And where this pressure is brought to bear upon the pulpit by the people, is not the effect, as a rule, the weakening of the pulpit as a means of good? Those preachers are desired and asked for who, while they may preach the truth, preach it in as cold, stiff, and formal a way as the pinnacles on the roof, or the pillars of the gallery belonging to the chapel in which he preaches. Very fine! Yes, like a vase filled with artificial flowers, or a statue decorated with princely clothing. But the rulers will have it so.

2. *This is an age of indifference to religious things.* All classes seem to be alike in this matter. There is no want of knowledge, but there is a want of concern respecting the things to which the knowledge refers. The claims of God, of the Bible, of Christ, of Christian duties, are known as well as they can be taught by Sunday Schools and a regular ministry of the Gospel. But to feel and to



THE LAY PREACHER.

Decay of Pulpit Power.

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been multiplied a thousand-fold during the last fifty years; and the greatest proportion of increase is in that kind which is purely fictitious and ephemeral. The daily papers and the periodic novels, in volumes and in magazines, command an unprecedented portion of the leisure time of the majority of the congregations of our chapels and churches. They are ready at hand for any moment, on the drawing-room tables, in the libraries, in the bedrooms, on railway stalls, at breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper. They are companions in travel by rail, by sea, by walking, by seaside visits. A newspaper for the tradesman and merchant, a yellow, blue, or white covered novel for the aspiring young man and young woman, seem to be inseparably connected with their life and happiness.

Conceive, then, if you can, of the effects of *such* reading upon the mind and heart. It is utterly impossible for such reading to produce a condition of mind that will appreciate or yield to powerful preaching; it will revolt against it; and preaching which, to other minds not thus influenced, would be effective, in these instances is simply the utterances of solemn sentiments and sober counsels, well becoming the sacred desk, but altogether out of place in the experience of the heart and the practice of the life.

6. *Getting money.* This is a busy age. Everybody is making haste to be rich. Speculation is carried to an extent which borders on madness. A few years ago a man was content to make a fortune in half a century, but he must now make it in almost as many days, or he is dissatisfied with his success; and what was considered a fortune then is now only regarded as the nucleus of one. Money, money, money is the cry of the multitude, and the chief paradise in which they can only find rest. "We must have more money for pleasure-taking; more money for dress; more money for building; more money for fortunes;" and so the poor are *striking* for more money; the rich are speculating for more money; the merchant and tradesman are increasing the price of their goods for more money. The world is going right mad for more money.

Who can think of this fact without discerning a cause *operating* in the hearers of the Gospel counter to its

power. The Gospel is secondary, money first. The cry of the preacher is lost in the cry for money. The noise of the "cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music" around the great god of copper, silver, and gold in the world's plain, and the scuffling to get a share, drown the sound of Gospel preaching and the spirituality of Gospel worship.

Nor is the Church herself altogether free from blame in this matter. To an outside spectator it must seem sometimes that the Church is a great machine for getting money to work up into so many ways and ends, according to the decisions of her synods, committees, and convocations. Money to build chapels; money to pay the ministry; money to support the ministers' widows and orphans; money to send the Gospel to the heathen; money for home missions; money for tract and Bible societies; money for Sunday Schools; money by all means, at all times, from all sources, until, as we say, to an outsider, it would seem the Church is nothing but a machine for getting money and scattering it.

We know well, and say it most distinctly, that the Church on earth, in her organisation and workings, can no more exist without money than the State or the family; and she must have it. But it would be well for the Church to consider how far the occupancy of her mind, and the employment of her time for getting money by present methods and agents, although for sacred purposes, detracts from the power of the pulpit upon the pew.

7. *Decay of piety in the Church.* The show and profession of piety have not diminished in the Church, but the spirit and power have. And hence we find that those means and auxiliaries, which, when in active and efficient operation, contribute so much to the power of the pulpit, have declined. We refer to heartfelt sympathy with the pulpit in its aim and object; co-operating zeal and labour with the pulpit in its efforts to do good; support of the pulpit in word, and faith, and love; regarding the pulpit as the chief agent of God in the conversion of sinners; prayer for the pulpit in the Sunday morning prayer-meetings, in other prayer-meetings, in the family, and in the closet; speaking only good of the pulpit before children, servants, neighbours, and friends; invitations to

the ungodly to hear the Gospel, with such words of commendation of the preacher as may be wise and truthful.

How far the absence of these things have contributed to the decay of pulpit power we leave our readers to ponder. We know that where these things are maintained in a church, by an under-existing strength of piety, there is little complaint of the want of pulpit power. Given a church which rallies around its pulpit with its prayers, its sympathies, its commendations, its co-operations, that pulpit shall be a power for good every way to that church and its surroundings. But a pulpit standing alone in its love of souls, in its longings to do good, in its aims to advance truth and righteousness among men, leading in the battle with no army following: how can it be powerful in the proportion that it might and that it is designed to be? If the church fail to hold up the hands of its preacher while he stands as a messenger from God to the people, let that church cease to complain that the conflict is against the hosts of the Lord, and their leader is wanting in power and success.

We have thus gone through a brief consideration of some of the things which, so far as the pew is concerned, contribute to the decay of pulpit power. We have written what we think. It may be that others will not entirely agree with us. This we do not expect.

We have thought proper to show that the pew is to blame, as well as the pulpit, for that decay of its power of which we have heard so much in these last days.

In another article we propose writing of the *Remedies* for the Restoration of Pulpit Power.



God's GLORY HIS OWN.—The creatures, although they may rob God of His glory, and reflect dishonour upon God, and seem to eclipse Him by sin, yet they can add no glory to Him; as the moon, which receives light from the sun, may interpose between it and the earth, but she can in no way add to the sun's brightness, or make it more illustrious.—*T. Goodwin.*

Incidents, Scenes, and Characters in the Acts of the Apostles.

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS.

Acts ix.

THIS is one of the most important events in the whole history of primitive Christianity. The wisdom and goodness of God appear most conspicuously in this event taking place when it did. The Gentile world was just needing this man as its great missionary. The Jewish Christian Church was suffering and groaning under his persecutions. At an age in life when most adapted to the work for which he was designed, he was seized by God and claimed for His service.

Look at his conversion as an *evangelical fact*. 1. He was *arrested* in his acts of sins and persecutions. 2. He was *convinced* of his sins, and *repented* of them. 3. He *submitted* to inquire from God what He would have him do. 4. He *prayed*. "Behold, he prayeth." 5. He *waited* the pleasure of God to save him. 6. He received instructions from Ananias, who was a Christian; showing how changed he was, and how willing to have instructions from one whom he at one time sought to destroy. 7. He believed and was baptized. 8. He joined the Church. 9. He preached Jesus. 10. He avowed his adhesion to Christ, and gave himself to life-long labours for Him.

These things are obvious in the account we have of his conversion in Acts, ninth chapter.

It would not be difficult to show how all the essential features in his conversion in some form and degree appear in every conversion which takes place under the Gospel; so that it might, as he states in 1 Tim. i. 16, be regarded as a *pattern conversion*.

We might now glance at Saul's conversion as a splendid evidence of the reality and power of the Christian religion.

I. Saul of Tarsus was a man of *extensive literary attainments*. He did not, therefore, embrace the Christian religion through *ignorance*.

II. He was a man of *penetrating, cautious, and comprehensive discrimination*. He did not, therefore, become a convert to Christianity from want of ability to weigh, compare, and judge its origin, nature, claims, and obligations.

III. He was a man of *strict moral principles and actions*. He had no superior in these. He did not, therefore, become a Christian for the sake of outward reformation in life, or inward revolution in moral rectitude.

IV. He was at the time of his conversion in high positions both in Church and State, and was on the high road to more distinguished honours. He did not, therefore, become a Christian for the sake of worldly, ecclesiastical, or literary honours.

V. He had no predisposition or predilection to the Christian religion at the time of his conversion. Contrariwise, he hated it, and was doing his utmost to exterminate it from the earth.

VI. It was at the risk of his life, and the cost of many personal valuable sacrifices, that he became a Christian.

VII. His conversion was an *actual fact*. His subsequent history is a demonstration of this. Whose life ever presented a greater contrast than this apostle's before and after conversion ?

This man of God not only made impression on the age in which he lived, but upon the ages of all time. He is living, speaking, and working now in the mind and heart and life of Christendom more than any one human spirit that ever was enshrined in mortal flesh.

Can it be supposed that the religion to which *such a man* became a convert and an adherent was an imposition ?

Had the New Testament no other instance of conversion to Christianity than that of Saul of Tarsus, this were enough to establish it as a religion of Divine light and power. But to this of Saul's there are thousands more ; and *every* conversion—whether in New Testament times, or in times since or now, is a demonstration of the divinity of the religion of the Son of God.

THE EDITOR.

Who and what is Christ ?

A SERMON BY REV. DAVID STONER, NOT BEFORE PUBLISHED.

“What think ye of Christ ?”—MATT. xxii. 42.

WHAT is there that is more ambiguous and equivocal, more uncertain and unworthy of confidence, than common report ? Fame is apt to report the virtues of a man in a whisper, or to write them in the sand ; but blazons his faults with the voice of a trumpet, and engraves them with an iron pen in lead on a rock for ever. Common report imputes crimes to men they have never committed, accuses them of errors into which they never fell, and sullies the brightest actions by

assigning detestable motives from which those actions never originated. If a man's character is pure, so prone are depraved mortals to detraction, so eagle-eyed are they in reference to the imperfections of their fellow-men, that they are sure either to find or to make a blot upon it; and if it is impure, they will generally distort it a thousand degrees beyond its real baseness. Our ever-blessed Saviour was pure and blameless; there was no depravity in His nature, no guile in His mouth, no guilt in His life, no stain in His character, no imperfection in His conduct, and yet how did common report malign and calumniate Him? Listen to the vague rumours that circulated in Judea concerning this illustrious Personage, and you will at once be convinced how contradictory, absurd, and unjust the generality of them are. Place yourselves in idea in the streets of Jerusalem, and propose the question of our text to every company you meet with, and hear for yourselves. Propose the question, "What think ye of Christ?" to the company of supercilious Pharisees. "What think we of Christ?" says one of them. "We think He was an impostor, and deceived the people. He was an apostate and false prophet. He possesses a pleasing, popular eloquence—the common people hear Him gladly; but He is gaining an ascendancy over the populace, that He may indulge His ambitious schemes, and destroy us and our temple: for He has already said that He will destroy it. It is true He has bewitched the people by casting out devils and working miracles; but His power has sprung from hell. He casts out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." This was the opinion of the Pharisees.

Propose this question to the company of common Jews, "What think ye of Christ?" "He is Elias," says one. "It is John the Baptist that has risen from the dead," says another. "It is one of the ancient prophets," rejoins a third. "How can it be?" inquires a fourth. "Is He not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? and His brethren and sisters, are they not all with us?"

Enter into the solemn Sanhedrim, to the assembly of the priests and elders, and hear what they think of Him, and you will hear one observe, "This Man is not of God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath-day;" but others inquire, "How can this Man, being a sinner, do these miracles?" You will hear one observe, "What do we? for this Man doeth many miracles; and if we let Him thus alone, the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." Then the high-priest observes, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." But Nicodemus asks, "Doth

our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" Leaving the Sanhedrim, perhaps you will meet with some of Christ's relatives according to the flesh; and if you put the question to them, they will answer, "We want to lay hands on Him, and confine Him. He has a devil, and is mad—why hear ye Him?" You now come to the vast multitude listening to the words that fall from His lips, and ask them, "What think ye of Christ?" "He is a good man; but he deceiveth the people." "He is a glutton and a wine-bibber," rejoins another. A third will answer, whose eyes Christ has opened, "Since the world began, was it not heard that any man had opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing." "Never man spake like this Man," cries another; "He speaks with authority, and not as the Scribes." Ask Peter his opinion, and he cries, "He is the Son of the living God." And perhaps at this moment you will hear Christ Himself, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."

Amidst opinions and sentiments so conflicting and contradicting, upon a subject so interesting and important, what dependance can there be placed upon the rumours and views of men? And as it was then, even so it is now. Propose the question to your fellow-creatures, and you will meet with different answers. One will answer that He was a good philosopher, that He lived a spotless life, and sealed His doctrines with His blood. Others will tell you that He was nothing but an impostor; and a third class will assure you that He was "the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." Disgusted and wearied with hearing these clashing sentiments of men, turn we to the oracles of truth, and let us here propose the question, assured of meeting with a satisfactory answer. It is evident that the sacred writers thought—

I. THAT CHRIST WAS THE PROMISED MESSIAH.

The Jews about the time of Christ's appearance were in expectation of the Messiah, and the apostles and primitive preachers of Christianity proved Jesus of Nazareth to be that Messiah. Paul confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, proving that Jesus was the very Christ. And again at Thessalonica, three Sabbath-days he reasoned with the Jews out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Jesus whom he preached to them was Christ. And that Jesus was the Christ, the anointed Messiah, appears—

1. *From the prophecies that were fulfilled in Him.* The prophets, several centuries before the advent of our Saviour, had drawn a portrait of Him, and when we come to compare the shadows with the substance, the prophecies with the real facts,

we find that all the predictions concerning Christ were actually accomplished. The birth of Christ was the subject of prophecy. The time of His birth had been distinctly marked. Nearly 1700 years before His appearance, dying Jacob exclaimed, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between His feet, until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." That is, the civil government and ecclesiastical polity shall not finally depart from Judah until Shiloh shall have a congregation of religious followers attached to Him; and this was accurately fulfilled. About eleven years after the birth of Christ, Judea was made a Roman province, and thenceforth it was governed by a Roman deputy, and the judicial power of life and death was taken away from the Jews, and was never afterwards restored. Their ecclesiastical polity was destroyed with their city and temple, by the Romans, about seventy years after the birth of Christ. At that time the Gospel had been preached through the known world by the apostles, by whom numbers of believers had been gathered to our Shiloh.

Daniel also foretold the time of Christ's appearance, at the end of sixty-nine prophetic weeks from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, or a period of 483 years; it was exactly accomplished. From the prophecy of Haggai, also, it might be inferred that Christ should come while the second temple was standing, and he declared that the desire of all nations should come, and that the glory of the latter house should be greater than of the former, and this was only verified inasmuch as Christ visited it, and there was the scene of His labours and doctrines. The place of His birth was also the subject of prophecy, and Micah exclaimed, "And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth that shall be ruler in Israel." And by a wonderful coincidence of circumstances this prediction was realised.

His parents were the subjects of prophecy, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel." And this virgin was to be of the "house of David, and of the tribe of Judah." These prophecies were fulfilled in Mary, and can be fulfilled in no one else, for the Jew have now entirely lost the distinction of tribes, so that no Jew can tell to what tribe he belongs; and, as history informs us, Vespasian the Roman Emperor commanded all the branches of the tribe of Judah that could be found to be cut off, to obvi-
their hopes of a future Messiah.

The prophets mention the harbinger and forerunner of Christ. Malachi speaks of him as Christ's messenger, and Elijah, &

should go before His face and prepare the way. These predictions were fulfilled in the person and ministry of John the Baptist.

Again, his sufferings and death were often touched upon by the prophets. Take Isaiah liii., and compare it with the account the Evangelists give of the death of Christ. As an instance, this was the chapter the Ethiopian eunuch was reading in his chariot; and when Philip pointed out to him the fulfilment of it in Christ, he believed and was baptized. The reading of this chapter and the comparing it with the account given by the Evangelists, was blessed to the conviction of that noble infidel, the Earl of Rochester, at twenty-five.

The treachery of Judas was spoken of by David, and Isaiah speaks of His back being given to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and that He hid not His face from shame and spitting. The prophets foretold that not a bone of Him was to be broken, but that He would be pierced: "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced." That He should suffer at Jerusalem, and without the gates. That vinegar and gall would be given Him to drink. That transgressors were to be His dying companions, and that He was to have His grave with the rich man in His death; and need I add that all these were accurately fulfilled.

His resurrection also was typified by Jonah, and foretold by David: "Thy flesh also shall rest in hope, for Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell (in the place of separate spirits), neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption."

2. *From the extraordinary testimonies which He received that He was sent by the Father to be the Saviour of the world.* Venerable Simeon took Him in his arms and said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." "Anna, a prophetess, coming in at that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to them that looked for redemption in Israel." When Christ was baptized, the Spirit descended upon Him in a visible manner, and a voice was heard from the clouds, saying, "Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And when John saw Him coming towards him, he exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." By a display of His omniscience, Nathaniel was constrained to confess that He was "The Son of God, the King of Israel." Peter declared Him to be "The Son of the living God," and said, "To whom shall we go but unto Thee, Thou hast the words of eternal life." Nay, devils themselves were constrained to attest

the truth; they said, "Let us alone, what have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? We know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." At the transfiguration, also, a voice was heard from the excellent glory, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and on another occasion Christ prayed, "Father, glorify Thy name;" then came there a voice from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." It appears—

3. *From the miracles which He performed.* To those miracles we find Christ Himself appealed on many occasions as satisfactory evidences that He was sent by the Father to be the Saviour of the world. "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not; but if I do, then believe not Me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me and I in Him." And the miracles that Christ performed were instrumental in convincing many of the Jews that He was the Messiah. Many of the Jews who saw the resurrection of Lazarus believed on Him in consequence. To those miracles Christ appealed when John sent two of his disciples, saying, "Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again the things that ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them." And these were proofs sufficient that Christ was He that should come into the world. On this self-same principle reasoned the man who had been born blind, but whose eyes Christ had miraculously opened, with the Pharisees, "Since the world began was it not heard that any man had opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing." And, indeed, all nature was at the beck of Christ, ready to obey the slightest tokens of His will. The howling blast and the foaming billows of the tempestuous ocean heard His voice, "Peace, be still, and there was a great calm." The fishes in the briny deep obeyed His pleasure. One of them supplied Peter with a piece of money; a multitude filled the nets of the disciples. Bread was multiplied in the hands of the eater. Devils were compelled to dispossess the tormented. And on one occasion he gave them permission to enter into a herd of swine, "who ran down into the sea and were choked." The fig-tree felt His power, and withered away. The water beheld its Creator, and blushed into wine. He new-created absent limbs.

"He from thick films did purge the visual ray,
And in a sightless eyeball poured the day."

Those who had been deaf heard the voice of Him who spake as

never man spake. He healed all their diseases, and raised the dead. It appears—

4. *From the doctrines that He preached.* Had He been an impostor, would He not have framed His doctrines so as to make them more palatable to flesh and blood? Less grating to the prejudices of the supercilious Jews, less humiliating to the pride of the Gentiles? But His doctrines bear the seal of purity, and breathe the fragrance of heaven. As it was said of the orations of Demosthenes, there was an odour of the lamp, so we may say of the sermons of Christ, there was in them an odour of divinity, holiness, and heaven. His doctrines were directly opposed to the contracted views, the national prejudices, and the erroneous notions of the Jews, and of the worldly wisdom and the idolatrous practices of the heathens. His doctrines were unpalatable to flesh and blood, as for instance, Except ye repent, ye sanctimonious Pharisees and white-washed Scribes, ye shall all likewise perish. "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel." "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself." "If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Me." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many shall seek to enter and shall not be able." It appears—

5. *From the phenomena at His birth, death, and resurrection.* The shepherds in the solemn stillness and awful gloom of midnight, whilst keeping watch over their flocks in the field, were consternated and terrified by the sight of a glorious angel. "The angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid." But their fears were hushed by the wonderful message announced, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will toward men." No convoy of angels had announced the birth of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. No heavenly chorus had been heard when Moses, Job, David, or Solomon were born into the world; but when Christ came, the wise men saw

His star in the east, and shepherds heard celestial music. Heaven appeared to come down to earth. And all this served to confirm the testimony of the angel, "Unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Several appearances that took place at His death will confirm the same truth, and declare that He was an extraordinary personage. The sun, moon, and stars hid themselves in darkness, the shades of midnight covered Jerusalem at noonday, and when He surrendered His life the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, the earth quaked, and rocks rent, and the graves were opened. Such circumstances as these had never taken place at the death of any person before. Kings and prophets, giants and philosophers, heroes and conquerors, had given up the ghost, but no such phenomena appeared at their death; still the sun continued to shine, and the earth to move in its regular diurnal course. But when Christ died, the earth groaned to her centre, as a prelude to her last groans, when final ruin shall drive her ploughshare through creation; when her God shall appear in grandeur, and the world shall be on fire. The bright orb of day refused to look at the guilt of the Jews, and to see the suffering Creator; the moon and stars put on their sable veil of mourning at the awful sin of man; the rocks (more sensible and yielding than the adamantine flinty hearts of men) rent in sunder; the temple's veil was significantly divided; nay, even the slumbers of the silent dead were interrupted, the territories of the grim king of terrors were invaded, the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints that slept arose. At the sight of these wonders we can conclude with the Roman centurion, "Truly this was the Son of God."

The sacred writers thought—

II. THAT CHRIST WAS TRULY AND PROPERLY GOD.

This is a truth revealed in the Book in terms as clear and plain, that one might be ready to wonder how any who pretend to take revelation for a rule of their creed could deny it. He who runs may read it, and may understand that Christ, the second Person in the ever blessed Trinity, is God over all, blessed for evermore. The same titles, perfections, works, and worship are given and ascribed to Him as to God the Father, in the lively oracles of Divine truth.

1. The name *Jehovah* is equally given to the Father and the Son. Christ is our "righteous Branch," and yet we are assured that His name whereby He should be called was "Jehovah our Righteousness." The name of God is also applied to the Saviour of sinners. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Thomas, addressing Christ, said, "My Lord and my God." Paul says, "Great is the

mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh." He was called "Immanuel, God with us." John calls Him the true God, "This is the true God and eternal life." He is called, "The mighty God." His name was to be called, "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God," &c. And the great God ; he is entitled, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, that is, King of kings and Lord of lords. God the Father is entitled, "The first and the last ;" and so is God the Son, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last."

God the Father is *self-existent*, and so is God the Son. He takes unto Himself the peculiar name of God, expressive of His self-existence, "Before Abraham was, I am." "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." God the Father is *eternal*, and so is God the Son ; of Him it is said, "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," or from the days of eternity. "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." God the Father is *immutable*, and so is God the Son. Unto the Son again He saith, "They shall perish, but thou remainest ; they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed ; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." God the Father is *omnipotent*, and so is God the Son ; "for all things that the Father doeth, the same also doeth the Son likewise." He said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end ; He that was, and is, and is to come, the Almighty." God the Father is *omnipresent*, and so is God the Son ; for He said, "Wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." "The Church is His body ; the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." God the Father is *omniscient*, and so is God the Son. When Solomon was addressing the Deity in his prayer, he says, "Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of the children of men ;" and yet Peter said of Christ, "Lord, thou knowest all things ; Thou knowest that I love Thee." "Jesus knew all men ; and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." God the Father is *infinitely wise*, and so is God the Son. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." God the Father is *holy*, and so is God the Son. He is called, "The Holy Child Jesus." The demon exclaimed, "I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." Hence, the angels cry in addressing the three Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts ;" and again, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." God the Father is *faithful*, and so is God the Son.

He is termed "The Faithful Witness;" and He has declared, "The heavens and the earth shall pass away; but My words shall not pass away." God the Father is *righteous*, and so is God the Son. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day." God the Father is *merciful*, and so is God the Son. "We beheld His glory, as the glory of God the Father, full of grace and truth." "According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration," &c. God the Father is said to have *created the world*, and so is God the Son. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." "The world was made by Him; and the world knew Him not." The Father is said to *preserve the world*, and so is God the Son. "By Him all things consist. He upholdeth all things by the word of His power." To the Father *divine worship* is paid, and the same to God the Son. "When He bringeth His first-begotten into the world, He saith, Let all the angels of God worship Him." It is solemnly decreed that to the name of Jesus "every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." And John heard in heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." He, as well as the Father, is the proper object of *prayer*; for Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He, as well as the Father, is the proper object of *praise*, as we have already noticed the innumerable multitude worshipping in heaven. He is the proper object of *faith*. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" for He, as well as the Father, is said to forgive sins. He said to the man sick with the palsy, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." And the evasion that says the honour that was given to Christ is different from the honour that was ascribed to God, is contradicted by the words of Christ, "That all men should honour the Son, *even* as they honour the Father." Nay; He says, "All things which the Father hath are Mine." All the names, titles, attributes, works, and worship that are the Father's, belong to Christ. So that the words of Christ are true, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

(To be concluded in our next.)

Materials for Sermons.

XXX.—RECEIVING THE HOLY GHOST.

“Have ye received the Holy Ghost?”—ACTS XIX. 2.

I. **I**F you have received the Holy Ghost, *you have been convinced of sin.* This is His work and His only; and where genuine conviction of sin has been wrought in the heart, there need be no doubt as to whether the Holy Spirit has been received by you for that purpose. “When He is come, He shall reprove or convince the world of sin.”

II. If you have received the Holy Ghost, *you have been led to Jesus Christ for salvation.* He is the Spirit of Christ. His office is to testify of Christ; to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us. He cannot, therefore, lead the inquiring penitent elsewhere for salvation but to Christ. If you have been to the Crucified, and looked upon Him as the Saviour whom God has set forth; if you have believed in Him with all your heart as the Lamb of God taking away your sins; if by faith in Him extended on the accursed tree you have, like Bunyan, lost the crushing load of your sins, and thenceforth leaped on your way as the lightsome hart, you have in this an undoubted sign that you have received the Holy Ghost.

III. If you have received the Holy Ghost, *you have been raised into a new life.* “You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” This spiritual death has gone, and you have entered into the resurrection and life of Christ Jesus the Lord. And how were you quickened? St. Paul tells you that the Holy Ghost is the “Spirit of life.” The Saviour tells you that “it is the Spirit that quickeneth.” The Spirit sustains you in this life. He strengthens you in *its* actions and enjoyments. You have proofs of life within you, as much as a living body gives proofs of life within it. You walk in the ways of holiness. You stand in the old paths. You work out your salvation. You feel after God. You see the things which make for your peace. You talk of His wondrous goodness. When there is such life moving, breathing, growing in the soul, there is unquestionable evidence of the

indwelling of the Holy Ghost. There is **no** other source for this life.

IV. If you have received the Holy Ghost, *you enjoy the witness of your sonship with God.* It is the work of the Spirit to convey to the heart of the saved believer the fact of his salvation. We can conceive of no other satisfactory way in which he can arrive at this knowledge. The Scriptures recognise this as the only method of knowing your sins forgiven, and your adoption into the Divine family. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 14-16.)

V. If you have received the Holy Ghost, *you walk in Him*, or your manner of life is according to His guidance. You do not live after the flesh. You are not governed by the multitude around you. Reason, education, nature, are not the guides of your life. You are subject to a higher and more infallible Teacher and Leader. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." "Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

VI. If you have received the Holy Ghost, *there is a conflict going on within you.* Light and darkness meet each other in a strife for the ascendancy. Nature and grace stand opposed to each other in their operations. Doubt, unbelief, and faith struggle together. Heaven and earth have counteracting influences. Zeal and apathy are antagonistic. Satan and Christ fight for the mastery. You oftentimes feel the commotion; groan under the conflict; cry out for deliverance, "Take my soul out of prison." "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." But while the struggle is going on within, you

have the joyous assurance that the Spirit is victorious. He would not abide in your hearts to be in *subjection* to any of His enemies.

VII. If you have received the Holy Ghost, *you are spiritually minded*. Your affections and thoughts are baptized and permeated with His influences; your mind ascends above the transitory things of earth. It rises to God and heaven. It seeks the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Where your treasure is there your heart is also. Although you may have your mind associated with things secular, as circumstances in the business, family, and connections in life require, it is nevertheless uncontrolled and ungoverned by them. "They that are in the flesh do mind (care for, anxious about, delight in) the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit (in whom the Spirit dwells, and who walk in the Spirit) the things of the Spirit." Their principal thought, desire, and pursuit are after the things which are spiritual. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

VIII. If you have received the Holy Ghost, *you pray under His influence and teachings*. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." "Be ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost."

IX. If you have received the Holy Ghost, *you will bear His fruit in your life*. As the works of the flesh are "manifest" in him who is in the flesh, so the fruit of the Spirit is borne by him in whom He dwells. A tree is known by its fruits: a man is known by his tempers and actions. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." These are the necessary and inevitable "fruit," which grows upon the life in which the Holy Ghost is the ruling influence.

X. If you have received the Holy Ghost, *you will love all those who have received Him*. It will not matter who they are,

where they live, what their church; if they possess the Spirit you will love them. You will recognise them, not by any of the peculiarities of their church, but by the manifestations of the Spirit. There is but *one* Spirit; and there is but one body of Christ, though having a diversity of members. The Spirit that runs through one runs through all. And this Spirit gives in all the same evidences of His existence, though they may vary somewhat in form and degree. And in whomsoever these evidences are seen, the Spirit within you knows them at once, and you will love them as brethren, as fellow-members, as co-heirs, as partakers of the common salvation. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another." "We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "There is one body and one Spirit." "In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit."

These are the substantial evidences of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. They are not the theories of human reasoning. They are Divine, Scriptural evidences, and therefore not to be questioned by anyone who admits the authority of the word of God. They are evidences which, while a spurious or semi-Christianity, false reasoning, unsanctified learning, and the perverted heart may endeavour to twist into other shapes and meanings, the Spirit-influenced mind takes them as expressing what they carry upon the surface of them.

And now, dear hearer, allow the question to be put to you, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Answer the question to your God and your conscience. Answer it in the light of the evidences which have been adduced. Say whether you have been convinced of sin, &c., &c. Let your answer be, "Yea, yea," or "Nay, nay." Do not err in this matter. To err here is extremely dangerous. There is no need for you to err. You may as easily know whether you have received the Spirit as whether you have life in your body, or strength in your limbs, or a heart in your bosom. You have only to look for the signs and evidences. Are they there to be seen and felt? Then doubt no more. Are they wanting?

Then you have not the Spirit: and without Him you cannot be saved. You can no more live in religion and in heaven without the Spirit than you can live in the body in this world without blood. Nothing short of Him will suffice. You may believe a great deal in the Scriptures: you may believe a great deal about religion. You may think that you have gone a great way towards Christ. Like the Ephesian disciples, you may have felt the repentance and faith which John preached, and received not only his water baptism but that of Christ; you may have been confirmed by Episcopal hands; you may have given in your name to be a member of a Christian church; you may be called by some sectarian name; but all these do not make you a living, holy, happy, divinely approved child of God. Observe the infallible rule of judgment:—"Now, IF ANY MAN HAVE NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, HE IS NONE OF HIS."

THE EDITOR.

XXXI.—THE CRYSTAL STREAM.

"And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb."—REV. xxii. 1.

O glorious sight! Let us draw near and see this great sight. Not a burning bush, indicative of the fiery trials through which God's people may have to pass; but "a pure river of water of life." How transparent! "clear as crystal." But oh, more glorious still! "proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb." O glorious thought! While gazing upon the river of life, and contemplating the amazing love of God, we behold in Christ an all-sufficiency for every sinner, an all-sufficiency for every saint, and an all-sufficiency for every glorified spirit before the throne. John vii. 37. The promise is sure. "And He showed me," &c.

Let us observe—

I. THE FULL PROVISION MADE FOR SINNERS. "A pure river of water of life." That this vision is emblematical of the grand provision for man we cannot doubt, when we consider that the Gospel is spoken of in various parts of the Bible as the water of life. In directing your attention to the water of life, we observe—

1. *That it gives life.* "A pure river of water of life." All men in their natural state are dead—"dead in trespasses and

sins." Water is necessary to life. Man cannot be restored without the water of life. John ii. 25, 26; iii. 5.

2. *It cannot be purchased.* Silver and gold cannot purchase it. Water is free, so are the living streams. Love opened the river of life, and love invites the thirsty to come and drink. Rev. xxii. 17; Isa. lv. 1.

3. *It is adequate to every sinner's case.* We have seen the ground so hard in summer, that it could only be broken up by the most violent effort. But when the showers descended its hardness gave way, and it was again prepared for the seed. Ps. lxxv. 10. The Gospel has penetrated and softened many an obdurate heart. Acts ix. 6; Rom. i. 16. The water of life produces a complete change in all who drink of it. 1 John i. 7. This river is broad, and deep, and full enough for all. It possesses full cleansing power. 'Tis the water of life can make us pure! Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

4. *It proceeds from God.* "Salvation is of the Lord." The water of life proceeds "from the throne of God," &c. Go not to Mecca to find the Saviour; go not to Jerusalem to realise an interest in the cleansing blood; He is nigh thee, sinner. Christ alone can save—save thee now. Acts iv. 12.

Let us observe—

II. THE REAL HAPPINESS OF BELIEVERS. "And He showed," &c. How applicable are these words to those individuals who have by faith seen the Lord; who have drunk of that living water, which is "in them as a well of water springing up into everlasting life!" They can truly say, "And He showed me," &c.

1. *Believers are the children of God.*

(1.) He is their life, "And He showed me," &c. The first sight of the pure river gave them joy; the first taste gave them life, spiritual life—i.e., the life sustained and determined in its nature and development by the life of Christ, who dwelleth in them by His Spirit. Gal. ii. 23; John iv. 14.

(2.) He is their sanctification. "Pure river, clear as crystal." Holiness is essential to God; therefore, He cannot delight in any but those who have received His impress. His children are partakers of His nature. He communicates His beauty and glory, and they reflect His image. 2 Cor. iii. 18.

They live in communion with God. 1 John i. 3. This intercourse promotes all the graces of the Spirit.

(3). He is their fulness. "He showed me," &c. He is the Dispenser of spiritual supplies. River denotes infinite fulness, abundance. The Lord of His fulness grants abundantly. Phil. iv. 19.

2. *Believers acknowledge the goodness of God.* This is done individually. "He showed me," &c. Ps. xxiii. 6. Who can behold the river without delight? Who can drink of its waters without acknowledging their sweetness? Shall we not tell what God has done for our souls? Yes! yes!

"Where'er we go we'll tell the story
Of the Cross.
In nothing else our souls shall glory,
Save the Cross."

III. THE ETERNAL FELICITY OF GLORIFIED SAINTS. "And He showed me," &c. In these words the pure, bright, complete, and eternal felicity of heaven seems to be intended.

The felicity of glorified saints is—

1. *Pure.* "A *pure* river." More pure than our minds can conceive. Heaven is a holy place. Rev. xxi. 27. Its joys, fruits, streams, streets, atmosphere, and inhabitants are all pure. Purity is its perfection. What a glorious place!

The felicity of glorified saints is—

2. *Complete.* "A *pure river* of water of life." The fulness of Christ will flow on like a river throughout eternity. Everyone will be happy, perfectly happy. Ps. xvi. 11.

The felicity of the glorified saints is—

3. *Bright.* "Clear as crystal." That which we now see through a glass darkly will become transparent, "clear as crystal." So bright that nothing can increase its brightness. All the light of the earth is but a shadow compared with the brightness of heaven. Rev. xxi. 23. The idolatrous temple of Diana was so bright and splendid, that the doorkeeper always cried to them that entered in, "Take heed to your eyes." But what power of vision must we have to behold the glory of heaven? What must be the splendour of the eternal throne, if the righteous shine forth as the sun? What need there is to cultivate our spiritual powers.

The felicity of glorified saints is—

4. *Eternal.* "Proceeding from the throne of God," &c. We have here an emblem of the unspeakable bliss which will flow as a river through all the regions of glory, and make glad eternally the city of God. Heaven is "an inheritance which is incorruptible," &c. The home of saints is an eternal home, and they will possess it eternally. They need not apprehend anything else. Eternity is its extent.

In conclusion—

1. Let all accept the provision made for their souls. There is salvation for all. "Preach the Gospel to every creature."

2. Let believers seek higher spiritual blessing. In Christ all fulness dwells.

3. Let the glorified praise God in heaven for ever. Rev. vii. 9-12.

Brighton.

J. B. HORNBERRY.

XXXII.—A CALL TO ACTIVITY.

ADAPTED FOR A MISSIONARY SERMON.

"Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people."—ISA. lxii. 10.

HERE, in the small compass of a single verse, we have five commands set before us, all pointing to work waiting to be done, and each claiming an equal share of attention. The work here indicated is to be done for the benefit of the people. The commands for this work proceed from the Governor of the universe—from God Himself. The servants employed in carrying out these commands are the preachers of the Gospel of salvation. The message comes to them at home in Zion, where they are disposed to sit at ease. Let us examine a little the commands as they appear in their order, and endeavour to derive some useful lessons from them.

I. "GO THROUGH, GO THROUGH THE GATES."

The workman in the city is aroused to a call of duty. Zion herself must now arise and open wide her gates. The sons of toil must come forth and spend their strength in the Lord's service, for urgent pressing business demands their care away from home. The sphere of labour is outwards. The streets and lanes of the city are not the limits of the King's empire. The gates of the city, whether iron, wood, or brass, must be passed.

The workmen must behold the outside of the town walls. The rough road must be trodden. His eyes must view the wide expanse of country in front, the dreary desert, the mighty forest, the distant mountain tops, the vast ocean, the outlying islands, the far off continent. "The earth is the Lord's." The servants of the Lord are commissioned to go into all lands. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," is the Divine command. St. Paul stayed not at Jerusalem after his conversion, but he went to Antioch, to Ephesus, to Philippi, to Athens, and to Rome. He travelled over sea and land in order to preach Christ to the people as the risen Saviour. And now in these latter days the Gospel message must be taken to the people. Sin and ignorance, idolatry and superstition are doomed, but not yet destroyed. The work is progressing, but much is yet left undone; the Church is not putting forth all her energy, though bold and valiant. We can truly say with the apostles, under these circumstances, "How shall they (the people) call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Rom. x. 14.

II. "PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE PEOPLE."

The idolatrous nations are a perverse people; they walk in crooked paths, and know not the straight way. The eyes of all such are covered over with the film of superstition, so that they cannot see the way to help themselves out of their trouble and distress. They cannot see their way to earthly prosperity, lacking the advantages of civilisation; much less can they behold the "way of holiness," and bring their feet to walk in the "paths of righteousness." The "way" must be "prepared" for them by the servants of God. They must be shown their ruinous state by nature, their helplessness while remaining in bondage, and the fact that they can be saved by turning to God with full purpose of heart. God will give us (the Church) "the heathen for our inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for our possession." See Gen. xii. 3, with Gal. iii. 8; Acts xxviii. 28; Rom. xv. 16. The preaching of the Gospel to the heathen will be like showers of rain falling upon parched ground. "The Lord will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel." Hosea ii. 21.

III. "CAST UP, CAST UP THE HIGHWAY."

The work having begun, must go on and prosper. The highway must be cast up, "For an highway shall be there, for the redeemed of the Lord to walk over." The way of the heathen is "hedged up with thorns," and the true path cannot be found. All around them dwells the ravenous lion; and the wild beasts of the forest are ready to "tear them to pieces." But the "crooked paths shall be made straight, and the rough places shall be made plain." God having begun a work, He will not tarry, but will bring out of darkness into light the benighted sons of Adam's fallen race. We are told, "A way shall be made in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters." The swampy marsh, where roam the hippopotamus, Egypt's river-horse; the dense jungle, where dwells the bear, jealous of her whelps; these regions shall be opened up, and an highway prepared for the people round about to walk in, a path of peace and safety. A way must be prepared for the people; an highway must be cast up.

IV. "GATHER OUT THE STONES."

All obstacles must be removed out of the way when the Gospel is to carry the victory, for it is of a reforming nature, it strikes deep into the heart and makes clean work of it. There must be outward reformation to prove the power of the Gospel. The life must prove by its fruit the genuineness of its repentance. But the heathen is bound hand and foot. The stones of stumbling must be removed from their path; idols must be overthrown; tyrants who oppress must be made to "let the people go;" heathen temples must be changed for Christian sanctuaries. Havelock's practice must be carried out. The laws of Mahomet must be set at nought. The hard and dry stones of Buddhism and Paganism, remnants of past ages, must be gathered up, and thrown out of the way. The stones of infidelity and Atheism must not be allowed to lie carelessly about unheeded by the servant of the Lord. The people must have an opportunity of escape.

V. "LIFT UP A STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE."

There must be a rallying point for the people to gather round; the blood-stained banner of the cross must be lifted up; for if Christ be exalted, all men will be drawn unto Him. Carey lifted up the standard in India. Moffat did so in Africa.

Williams did the same in the South Sea Islands. In all these places there are at this day standard-bearers sent out by the churches; but in proportion to the greatness of the field, we might truly exclaim, What are these among so many ?

“ Arise and reign, thou King of kings,
Assert Thy universal sway;
Till earth subdued its tribute brings,
And distant regions all obey.”

J. R.

Divisions of Texts.

THE MEETING OF RICH AND POOR.

MUCH distinction and separation in the ways of men and among them; but in the ways of the Lord and before Him they meet together, as—

- I. IN CREATION. One God makes them of the same material.
- II. IN PROVIDENCE. Same laws govern all.
- III. IN REDEMPTION. The same Saviour for all.
- IV. IN MORAL OBLIGATION. Bound by the same laws from heaven.
- V. IN GRACE. All saved by grace if saved at all.
- VI. IN THE HOUSE OF GOD. Though it would be well to see more meeting together here.
- VII. IN TROUBLES OF LIFE. All come into them.
- VIII. IN DYING. XI. IN THE GRAVE. X. IN THE JUDGMENT. XI. IN HEAVEN. XII. IN HELL.

WORSHIP.

“ And when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away.”—GEN. xv. 11.

- I. Here is the idea of sacrifice or worship.
- II. The idea of HINDRANCES to worship.
- III. The idea of action in prompt duty, DRIVING THE HINDRANCES AWAY.

THE PLACE OF CHRIST'S DWELLING.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."—Eph. iii. 17.

- I. WHERE Christ may dwell. In the heart.
- II. WHO may dwell in the heart? Christ.
- III. HOW Christ may be there. Dwell.
- IV. WHAT relation may He occupy to the heart? In.
- V. By what MEANS? By Faith.

Conclusion.—1. If Christ dwell in our hearts, we shall not be afraid to look into them. 2. We need not be afraid of their safety. 3. There will be no rival.

RECEIVING THE LORD JESUS.

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him."—Col. ii. 6.

- I. Ye received Him IN FAITH, walk in Him by faith.
- II. IN PRAYER, walk in Him by prayer.
- III. IN HUMILITY, walk in Him in humility.
- IV. IN LOVE, walk in Him in love.
- V. IN RESOLUTION to be faithful, walk in Him in resolution to be faithful.
- VI. AS YOUR ONLY AND ALL-SUFFICIENT SAVIOUR, walk in Him as such.

SLEEPERS.

"Awake, thou that sleepest."—Eph. v. 14.

SLEEP is a figurative term employed to set forth *the condition of unconverted men*.

- I. Sleep is a state of *forgetfulness*.
- II. A state of *insensibility*—senses closed.
- III. A state of *security*; no feeling of danger.
- IV. Yet, a state of *insecurity*; no means of defence, &c.
- V. A state of *misapprehension* of things past, present, future.
- VI. A state of *dreaming*.
- VII. Those who sleep soundly *are awake with difficulty*.
- VIII. Sleepy persons are *slothful*.
- IX. Those who love sleep *do not like to be awake; vexed with them who awake them*.
- X. Persons alarmed or startled in their sleep *are prone to fall asleep again*.
- XI. Those who sleep, *sleep in the night*.

PRAYER.

"But I give myself to prayer."—PSALM cix. 4.

- I. *The duty and privilege* of prayer.
- II. The wisdom of *voluntary* consecration to this duty.
- III. Private prayer. IV. Family prayer. V. Ejaculatory prayer. VI. Intercessory prayer. VII. Social prayer. VIII. Regularity and constancy in prayer.

*Thoughts about Jesus.*

BY A PREACHER.

HOWEVER perfect in outline and in filling up a man may think he has made his life, so that it is ready for exhibition in the gallery of saints, be it understood that it is only a blurred and blotted draft drawn with a feeble hand. Not until it is filled up and illuminated by the life-touch, life-nature, and life-spirit of Jesus, will it be worthy a place among them who are PERFECT IN CHRIST JESUS.

HUMAN nature out of Jesus is like a landscape or garden in December or January, withered, chilly, dreary, sterile, unpromising, and unprofitable; but in Jesus it is the landscape or garden in April, May, June, July, August, and September, budding, blossoming, fragrant, beautiful, pleasant, cheering, and fruit-bearing.

THE ideal and the actual are different. One man may have an ideal of a house which he can never build, another may have the ideal and be able to produce the actual. I have an ideal of a character which I can never form; but Jesus had an ideal of a character far higher, which he realised and exhibited; and by being *in Him through faith* I may attain to *His* ideal and actual character, far beyond my own, as much as the real beyond the artificial, or the drawing of Rubens beyond the daub of a school-boy.

SUCH was the Divine dignity of Jesus as the Son of God, even when He came into the world, that the Father said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." It was, in fact, the same

under the veil of humanity, in the form of a child, as it was before its incarnation, and as it would be when in exalted manhood it should take its seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The human was subject to changes, but the Divine was the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. A king is a king in a cottage as in a palace.

To imitate Jesus as an Example is not to copy Him as a Model. It were possible to re-act all His *human* life—preach His words, offer His prayers, practice His abstemiousness, endure His poverty, &c., and yet not be Christlike. But to drink in His Spirit, to concur in His will, to be holy as He was, to love as He loved, and bow to Divine authority as He did—although there may be little of His external acts and deeds—is to be an imitator of Him—Christlike.

How wonderful the goodness of Jesus appears in view of the fact that He exercised it among and upon a people who He *knew* were not appreciating it, were not grateful for it, and who would consummate their ingratitude by imbruing their hands in His bloody death. Goodness should not be measured in its donations by merit in the recipients. To do this is to change *goodness* into *justice*.

Jesus has not only delivered His people from the *hurt* of death, but from the *fear* of it. They are now in no bondage through fear. They see not the grimness of Death's face for the beauties of His countenance. They feel not Death's bony hand for the soft and loving embraces of His arms. They see not Death's darkness for the halo of heaven's glory which encircles their hopeful and believing vision.

As the good mother takes care that her infant, which comes "naked into the world," shall not want clothing, and suitable provision in other respects: so Jesus in His tender love has taken care that when His saints are removed from this world as they came into it, and are born into the heavenly state, they shall not be found naked. He shall clothe them with white robes. They have a building of God.

JESUS teaches that the flesh profiteth nothing; but that it is the *Spirit* that quickeneth. His coming in human nature would have been of no permanent, substantial good unto the world, if His Spirit had not been given. Granted that the Roman Catholic eats of the flesh of Jesus in the Eucharist, it "profiteth

nothing." It is the Spirit that quickeneth. "Now, if any man have not the SPIRIT of Christ, he is none of His."

THERE is no want which has, can, or shall arise in man as an inhabitant of this world, but nature contains a supply for it. So there is no want which has, can, or shall arise in man's spiritual life, but Jesus contains a supply for it.

I CANNOT expect to speak with the wisdom, the authority, and the Divinity of Jesus, but I may, through His indwelling Spirit, speak with similar *meekness, kindness, love, and mercy.*

THE *works* of Jesus, while they were in some kinds such as only God could perform, they were in other kinds such as the humblest believer may imitate.

As Mediator between God and man, Jesus atones with one and pleads with the other. As when a workman wishes to bring two opposite pieces together, he lays a hand on each; so Jesus, in bringing God and man into unity, places one Mediatorial hand on God and the other on man, and so unites them.

Pulpit Illustrations.

DEATH YOURS.

"All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours."—1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

DR. STONEHOUSE, who attended the Rev. Mr. Hervey during his last illness, seeing the great difficulty and pain with which he spoke, and finding by his pulse that the pangs of death were then coming on, desired that he would spare himself. "No," said he. "Doctor, no: you tell me I have but a few minutes to live; oh, let me spend them in adoring our great Redeemer. Though my flesh and my heart fail me, yet God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." He then expatiated in the most striking manner on these words of Paul, "All things are yours; life and death; things present, and things to come; all are yours; and ye

are Christ's, and Christ is God's." "Here," said he, "is the treasure of a Christian, and a noble treasure it is. Death is reckoned in this inventory: how thankful am I for it, as it is the passage through which I get to the Lord and Giver of eternal life; as it frees me from all the misery you see me now endure, and which I am willing to endure as long as God thinks fit; for I know He will, by-and-bye, in His good time, dismiss me from the body. These light afflictions are but for a moment, and then comes an eternal weight of glory. O welcome, welcome, death! thou mayest well be reckoned among the treasures of the Christian. To live is Christ, but to die is gain."

LIVELY STONES.

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house."—1 *PET.* ii. 5.

OF course, a living stone means a human being. The figure takes its origin from the seeming life of radiant stones, whose gleams and flashes have the seeming, at times, of will and life.

A man is said in the Bible to be more precious than the gold of Ophir; and of a woman it is said, "Her price is far above rubies." These were common comparisons. There is something in the glow of precious stones that peculiarly fits them to serve for such spiritual figures. There is about them a subtle light—a brilliancy—that burns without fire; that consumes nothing, and requires no supply; that for ever shines without oil: that is ever-living, unwasting, unchanged by any of the natural elements. A diamond that glows in the sunlight flashes yet more beautiful in the night. No mould can get root upon it; no rust can tarnish it; no decay can waste it. The jewels that were buried two thousand years ago, if now dug up from royal and priestly tombs, would come forth as fair and fresh as they were when the proud wearer first carried them in his diadem. Fit emblems by which to represent spiritual qualities, and the beauty and imperishableness of Christian virtue. And a company of holy men, resting upon the Lord Jesus Christ, may well be compared to a palace built upon broad foundations, and sparkling to the very summit with living stones, which throw back to the sun a differing flash through every hour of his rise or fall through the long day.—*H. W. Beecher.*

NO REAL HAPPINESS IN THIS WORLD.

"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again."—*JOHN* iv. 13.

THE world's great men may sometimes tell religion's great truths. Take, for instance, Louis XIV. and Goethe. Each possessed great talent, which was used in each case to build up an artificial great man on the world's pattern. Each inherited

much—the first, a royalty of state; the second, a royalty of temper and manner that raised his talents above the talents of other men. Each lived long and lived successfully, and yet each confessed fully how wretched their glory was. The confessions of Louis XIV. were convulsive and wordless—they were the inarticulate shudderings and writhings with which he turned from death to superstition, until superstition led him blindfolded to death. Those of Goethe—equally splendid, though in another field, and equally artificial—are incidentally referred to by Eckerman, one of his idolaters, whose reminiscences we have now before us in the German language:—

“When I look back,” said Goethe, speaking in his seventy-fifth year, “on my early and middle life, and see how few remain of those who were young when I was young, I am reminded of a summer residence in a watering-place. When we arrive, we form acquaintances with those who come before us, but who will soon be leaving. The loss is painful, but then comes the second generation, with which we live for a while on terms the most intimate. But then this passes away, and leaves us alone with the third, which arrives soon before our departure, and with which we have but little to do.

“I have often been praised as an especial favourite of fortune; and I will not myself complain. *But at the bottom there has been nothing but trouble and labour; and I can well say that in my whole five-and-seventy years I have not had four weeks of real pleasure.* It was the eternal rolling of a stone, that had always to be lifted up again for a new start.”

So spoke the great voluptuary poet-idol of Germany, and such is the world's estimate of glory and pleasure from the world's oracle.

What is it but the echo of the words of the Master, “Whosoever drinketh of this water *shall thirst again.*” Blessed be His name that He added, “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John iv. 13, 14.

RESPECT FOR THE HUMBLE GOOD.

“OH! I would walk
A weary journey, to the farthest verge
Of the big world, to kiss that good man's hand,
Who in the blaze of wisdom and of art
Preserves a lowly mind; and to his God,
Feeling the sense of his own littleness,
Is as a child in meek simplicity!”

CHRIST IS ALL.

"But Christ is all and in all."—COL. iii. 11.

My soul is like a hungry and thirsty child, and I need His love and consolations for my refreshment; I am a wandering and lost sheep, and I need Him as a good and faithful Shepherd; my soul is like a frightened dove, pursued by a hawk, and I need His wounds for a refuge; I am a feeble vine, and I need His Cross to lay hold of and wind myself about it; I am a sinner, and I need His righteousness; I am naked and bare, and need His holiness and innocence for a covering; I am in trouble and alarm, and I need His teaching; simple and foolish, and I need the guidance of His Holy Spirit.

In no situation, and at no time, can I do without Him. Do I pray? He must prompt and intercede for me. Am I arraigned by Satan at the Divine tribunal? He must be my Advocate. Am I in affliction? He must be my Helper. Am I persecuted by the world? He must defend me. When I am forsaken, He must support; when dying, my Life; when mouldering in the grave, my Resurrection. Well, then, I will rather part with all the world and all it contains, than with Thee, my Saviour; and God be thanked, I know that Thou, too, art not willing to do without me. Thou art rich, and I am poor; Thou hast righteousness, and I sin; Thou hast oil and wine, and I wounds; Thou hast cordial and refreshments, and I hunger and thirst. Use me, then, my Saviour, for whatever purpose, and in whatever way Thou mayest require. Here is my poor heart, an empty vessel, fill it with Thy grace. Here is my sinful and troubled soul, quicken and refresh it with Thy holy love. Take my heart for Thine abode, my mouth to spread the glory of Thy Name; my love, and all my powers, for the advancement of Thy honour and the service of Thy believing people. And never suffer the steadfastness and confidence of my faith to abate, that so at all times I may be enabled from my heart to say, "Jesus needs me, and I Him, and so we suit each other."

TESTS OF RELIGIOUS DECLENSION.

1. *Constant association with careless professors.* Duty will carry us into the world, but only sin makes us of the world. The question is not, are our relatives or our business acquaintances worldly, but are our chosen friends so? The first is consistent with a state of grace, the second never so.

2. *Vanity.* If a man is naturally vain, he will be in danger of sacrificing everything to a name.

3. *A tendency to speculate.* This often precipitates a fall. It

drags us into boon companionship with men whose idol is gold. It eats into that quiet which is essential to pray. It damages us in the judgment of others, and when we know others think we are sinking, we are apt to sink; and it often drags us into practices inconsistent with Christian integrity.

4. *Going to vain amusement.* This is wholly incompatible with a man's "walking in the fear of God and the comfort of the Holy Ghost."

5. *Indulging some besetting sin.* Soon this corrupts our whole standard of truth. We seek a new Gospel to make this sin permissible, and this new Gospel gives us a new master.

6. *Neglecting prayer.* Declension first knocks at the closet door. It is the only gate by which it can effect an entrance. But when in, it possesses the whole house.

7. *Laziness of speech and dealing.* There are always ebbs and flows in the human heart, but beware lest you increase the action. Satan, like the wreckers, watches for an ebb tide to seize the vessels that may be temporarily stranded.

BOASTING.

A gourd wound itself round a lofty palm, and in a few weeks climbed to its very top.

"How old mayest thou be?" asked the new-comer.

"About a hundred years."

"About a hundred years, and no taller! Only look! I have grown as tall as you in fewer days than you count years!"

"I know that well," replied the palm; "every summer of my life a gourd has climbed up around me, as proud as thou art, and as short-lived as thou wilt be."

Outlines of a Sunday School Address.

SEEING JESUS.

WE often hear the preacher speak about *looking* to Jesus, and *seeing* Jesus. The Sunday School teacher also uses the same language. The books we read contain the same kind of language; and the New Testament, too, often employs similar words. But, my dear children, you, perhaps, do not see the meaning of such words as applied to a being or an object which is actually out of sight. How can we see that which is

not to be seen? We cannot see a man who is in Australia, or look to a mountain that is thousands of miles away from us. But while this is true about things of the earth, it is not altogether true about things of religion. There is a way in which we can see the things of God which to our bodily eyes are unseen. And that way is *by faith*, with the eyes of the soul. When you cannot do your sums at school, or understand your lessons, and the teacher makes them plain to you, you say, "I see now"—that is, you see with the eyes of your mind. So when a man cannot believe in Jesus as his Saviour, and the minister, or the Bible, or the Spirit, explains to him the matter, he says, "*I see now*"—that is, he believes, for seeing is believing. And because seeing is believing, and believing is seeing, the Scriptures and ministers say, "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*" "*Look unto Me, and be ye saved.*" "*Looking* unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith." Seeing Jesus, then, is believing in Him, and believing in Him is seeing Him.

To make this more plain to you, I will tell you about a little boy of the name of *Harry*.

Harry often wished he could see Jesus. Often he looked up and down the street in the hope that He might be coming along. He would like to have been one of those children who got into His arms, and received His blessing. He would like to have been in the ruler's house when Jesus raised his little girl from death.

Harry was a little boy who thought a great deal about his Saviour. When he was naughty he was sorry, because he knew his conduct would not only grieve his mother and his father, but his Saviour in heaven; and he tried not to be naughty—he tried very hard. He prayed for the Holy Spirit to make him *willing*, to make him desire above all things to be God's child; and he thought if he could only *see* the Lord Jesus, it would be much easier to be a good boy always.

One day the superintendent of the Sabbath School, talking to the scholars, said they could see Jesus with the "*eye of faith.*" Harry, who was listening, was very much taken by that—"could see Jesus with the eye of faith. Oh, what sort of eyes are they?" the little boy thought. He forgot everything else the superintendent said. Perhaps he told what they were; but Harry was thinking out the matter himself, and not arriving at anything clear, he pushed up to his teacher and asked, "Are they big eyes, or black ones? Are they *spectacle* eyes?"

His teacher could not answer then, because she was hearing the lesson; but after it was through, she called Harry to her side, and asked him "who he was named after?"

"My uncle Henry," answered the little boy, with some surprise in his face.

"How do you know you have such an uncle?" she asked further. "You never saw him."

"Oh, I know it," said Harry; "I know it, because he sends me things."

"How do you know that *he* sends them?" asked Miss Jay.

"Oh, I know, because he *writes* me," answered the little boy, "and his letters all say, 'From your affectionate uncle Henry.'"

His teacher looked as if, after all, the proof were somewhat doubtful. He saw the look.

"Oh, I *know*," persisted the boy, "because folks have seen him there, and they told me; and if I grow up a good boy, he's promised to take me and do for me. Oh, I am just as *sure*—as sure as if I'd seen him;" and Harry did look as sure as could be.

"You never saw him with your two bright blue eyes," said Miss Jay. Harry shook his head. "But you *believe* in him just as fully as if you had." Harry nodded. "Well, that is seeing him with the '*eye of faith*,'" said his teacher. Harry's face flushed with a strange new thought. "*That is the way we see Jesus Christ*," she said. "Jesus sends us things. He gives us the sun to warm and light us, bread to eat, and clothes to wear. He has written to us; the Bible is His Word. *Other folks* have seen Him. Peter saw Him, and John, and Matthew, and they tell us what He did and said. And He promises to take us to Himself in heaven, if we trust in Him and do His will."

Harry listened with his *heart* as well as his mind. They were both wide open to receive instruction; and his teacher spoke slowly, that he might take it all in.

"Eyes of faith is seeing things with your *heart*," said Harry, at last—"making you feel and believe just as if you're *sure*?"

"Yes," answered his teacher, "that's it; believing, it *sees* God, and takes God at His word."

The little boy carried home with him a new and precious thought from the Sabbath School that day. It was a seed-thought, which he kept in his bosom; and he kept it so warm, and prayed so often over it the little prayer, "Open, O Lord, my eyes of faith, to see and know Thee, and love good and hate wickedness," that like the Son of God when He was a little boy in Nazareth, he "waxed strong in spirit, and the grace of God was upon Him."

Preachers and their Preaching.

ONE week-evening I was in a dilemma not unfrequently known by preachers; that is, I could not find a text that would *bite*. The last hour had arrived, and I turned over my Bible with solicitude. At last 1 Cor. x. 13, struck with force upon my mind:—"There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." It opened to my mind like a dissected map. I had much enlargement and comfort in preaching; and, finding that I should exceed the prudent limits of a week-evening service if I finished then, I broke off, and promised to take up the subject again that night three weeks. But then I found it impossible to draw the people from home, as another minister was to occupy the pulpit of B—— Chapel on the following evening. Six weeks thus elapsed before I could fulfil my promise. While we were on that occasion singing the second hymn, I saw under the gallery a man from a neighbouring village, whose circumstances of domestic "temptation" I knew well; and, lifting up my heart to God, while wondering what had brought him there, I said, "May you get a blessing!" The next morning, while preparing to attend a committee on some town's business, I received a call from him, as I supposed, for counsel and comfort. After some ordinary conversation, however, he said, "I see you are going out; but you must not go until I have told you something. Last night I left my home with no purpose of attending B—— Chapel, but with a very different purpose. Yet I was constrained to come, as if pushed or carried. My mind was in dreadful distress and agitation, and you know my case; but, when you showed how God could make a way of escape from our trials, light dawned. I felt deliverance sure. When I came out of the chapel, I took the bottle of poison which I had obtained, first to poison my wife, and then to poison myself, and I dashed it against the chapel-wall. My soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler."

The poor man called upon me again before I left the town, to repeat minutely all the circumstances, that I might have no doubt about the facts, but retain the full recollection of them, to the glory of his great Deliverer.

The ordering of the time, and of the links of circumstance, from the hour of my perplexity to the foreseen events of that evening six weeks after, when I finished the discourse, so opportune to the poor man's exigency, marks and illustrates the providence of God in a way that ought to convince the gainsayer, put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and confirm the faith of God's people in His faithfulness. And this record is to the glory of that faithfulness.

F. A. WEST.

Books.

Hymn Writers and their Hymns. By the Rev. S. W. CHRISTOPHERS. Second Edition. London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 9, Paternoster-row. —This volume contains twenty-four chapters, giving brief accounts of sacred hymns in all countries, ages, and churches. The style is dignified, the sentiment is evangelical, the spirit is devotional, and the aim is noble. We recommend this as a book of very interesting and profitable reading. —*The Bible Plan Unfolded.* By J. BIDEN. Second Edition. London: Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster-row. —We think the author aims at too much in his book for accomplishment. Nevertheless, there are some new and refreshing modes of thought in these pages, rather uncommon to the generality of books in these days. —*Gladness in Jesus.* By Rev. W. E. BOARDMAN, author of the "The Higher Christian Life." London: Morgan & Scott, 12, Paternoster Buildings. —This is a little book well worthy the fame of its author. It is highly calculated to be useful. —*My Class for Jesus.* By LILLIE. Edited by Rev. J. S. Spencer. London: Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster-row. —This is a most delightful account of the work of a Sunday School teacher; how she prayed, watched, worked, and taught, so as to bring

her class one by one to Jesus. It is a capital little present for Sunday School teachers. Mr. Spencer and the publisher have done their work well. —*The Basket of Fragments; or, Broken Pieces of Bread for Hungry Souls.* By SILAS HENN. London: G. Lamb, 6, Sutton-street, Commercial-road. —"Hungry souls" will find here the bread of life spread before them in such ways as will meet their most intense longings. Mr. Henn in this as in other works, writes with great earnestness and simplicity. —*The Decline of Methodism*, by a LAYMAN, is a pamphlet just published by Mr. Stock. —*The Hive, Appeal, The Missionary World, The New Cyclopædia of Illustrative Anecdote*, are also issued monthly by the same publisher. —*The Family Friend, The Children's Friend, and Old Jonathan* are illustrated monthlies, well adapted to family usefulness. —*The Open-air Mission, Nineteenth Report*, August, 1872. Office: 11, Buckingham-street, Adelphi, Strand, London. —This pamphlet of thirty-two pages gives a most encouraging report of the work and success of open-air preachers during the last year. We wish our space would allow us to quote. This mission deserves the warmest support of all churches.



THE LAY PREACHER.

Decay of Pulpit Power.

THE REMEDIES.

No. III.

THE causes which produce this decay must as far as possible be removed, or be opposed by other causes, which shall counteract and neutralize their operations. The Gospel is as much the power of God now as it was in the days of the apostles; and the power of God, to an extent, equal to the accomplishment of any design for which it was intended. There are no conditions of human nature or society which it cannot meet now as well as then.

“Loose him and let him go.” So said Jesus to the friends of Lazarus, after He had raised him from the dead. He had life and power, but they were bound up in graveclothes, so that neither was of any practical use to himself or to others. When the graveclothes were taken away, both were exercised in things harmonising with the purposes of his restored animation. The Gospel is to a great extent bound up in the things which make it too much like a mummy—a thing of ancient date, which has done its work, served its generation, and in these last days exhibited as an object of wonder, study, and speculation. But still it has *inherent* life and power; and the command of Christ, to all whom it may concern, is—“Take off the

graveclothes; remove the hindrances from My Gospel; loose him and let him go, and you shall find that he is as active and as vigorous to do his work as he was in the early days of his history. Loose him and let him go, to accomplish his work in the conversion of all the world to Me."

Go into one of the great ironworks of the "Black Country," and you will see a monstrous hammer which is motionless and doing nothing. How is this? Not because it has no weight, no capability in itself, but because its connection with the working power is suspended. When the obstacle is removed, and the connection is formed, it will display a power equal to anything for which it is designed. The Gospel in itself contains a Divine power, but if the connection is broken between it and the working agency of the Church and the Spirit, its action for doing good is arrested, and it becomes only a subject of thought and speech. Take away the obstruction, bring it into harmony with the moving Power from on high, and you find that both united effect what each separately could not. They fulfil the purpose of the Great Designer of them.

Imagine a soldier going into a field of battle with a sword, which in itself is as good as ever was held by warrior's hand, but it is encased in a beautiful and delicate scabbard of ivory, and entwined about with all kinds of lovely flowers. What exploits does he do with his sword? He uses it as best he can, but it is a burden to him, and he kills no enemy in the fight. Let him tear off the flowers, and take it out of the scabbard, and, *as a soldier*, with the love of his king and country in his heart, use the sword as he has been taught, and as it is meant to be, and he will do his duty, and contribute his share to the final victory.

The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, must be divested of all those artificial embellishments which, while pleasing to the eye, are serious hindrances to its efficient use, and which prevent the soldier of the Cross winning trophies for his Lord and King.

To be more particular. *In respect to the Pulpit*, the remedies may be briefly stated. A baptism of the Holy Spirit, in His light, life, peace, purity, and zeal, would

give power to him who received it. Spirituality of mind ; the love of souls ; disinterestedness of aim and motive ; thoroughness of heart ; consistency of living ; dwelling under the constant smiles of God ; a deep sense of responsibility ; looking to the recompense of reward ; burning sympathy with Jesus in His travail in birth for souls—these things would greatly contribute to the power of a preacher in the pulpit.

Preaching as God bids, warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus ; adhering to the old Gospel truths, which by the experiments of ages have demonstrated themselves to be suited to all times, places, and peoples ; giving up nothing that is clearly revealed in Scripture for the speculations of science, the theories of philosophy, the vagaries of imagination, or for "the things we like" of human weakness and depravity ; boldly and fearlessly declaring the *whole* unadulterated truth of God, irrespective of age, wealth, learning, influence, office, dress, style of chapel, literature, and every other thing which would lift itself up as a scare-crow to restrain and weaken the messenger of God ; regarding these things as so many bugbears, set up by the devil and human nature to frighten the teacher of the truth from speaking out, in Elijah-like fidelity, the word of the Lord.

In these respects as in others, we are persuaded there is a needs-be to go back to the models of apostolic and prophetic times. The imitation of these, in manner of life and preaching, would recover to the pulpit its lost power. We believe that the work to be done in human nature by the Gospel is precisely the same as ever it was, and the preaching of it which accomplished this work in those times would accomplish it now. Were Paul to come from the dead and live his life over again, and preach now as he did then, would not similar results follow ? Given the same heavenly endowments, and the same things in other respects, there would be in the Gospel preacher of to-day the same power as in the days of primitive Christianity.

In respect to the Pew, we think there is something to be done for the recovery of the power in decay. If all the fault was in the preacher, then, forsooth, all the remedy

would be with him. But this is not so. The people have had a hand in the production of the evil, they too must have a hand in the removal of it. Preachers are but men employed by God among men, to carry to them His truth as a means of their salvation. They are free agents among free agents. And however profound in wisdom, great in goodness, seraphic in zeal, endowed with the Holy Ghost, and powerful in themselves, they cannot be any more powerful in *results* than the free agency of the people allows. The Saviour had power in Himself to give life to the people, but they would not come to Him that He might give it them. Even Paul, powerful as he was in the Holy Ghost, in some instances was ineffective so far as results went, because of the blindness, hardness, and ignorance of the people, sustained by a self-willed determination not to be persuaded into the "new way everywhere spoken against."

Let it be remembered, then, that however powerful the preacher is in himself, he can only be powerful in *results*, so far as the people act in a way to agree with the power which he brings to bear upon them. Light is powerful, but it will not break the shutters of a man's house in order to shine into his room. Fire is powerful, but it burns and changes no substance but what is susceptible of its operations. The preacher, or the Gospel in his hands, may in itself be a powerful agent; but it will only be powerful in its effects as the free agency of man yields to remove the obstacles out of the way. Whatever is the obstacle in the way of a successful ministry among a people, the free agency of that people should act to remove it. Is it fine chapels? then let not such be built. Is it a certain class of literature? then let it not be read. Is it a certain kind of pleasure-taking? then let it be given up. And so of everything else. But we do not forget that not only must free agency yield to remove the hindrances, but it must *itself* yield. The others surrendered, and this withstanding, the results are not complete. The *will* must give up, and the Gospel will demonstrate itself equal in power to the entire renovation of human nature—a result which no other power in the universe could bring about.

We would not fail to specify the connection of the

believing Church with the ministry, and its important interest in this question. The apostolic ministry, with all its power, made repeated appeals to the churches for their prayers, their sympathy, their co-operation, and their godly living, as auxiliaries to their power, that "the word of the Lord might have free course and be glorified." These things are equally necessary now in order to restore the power of the pulpit. Let us have a people that neither looks at the ministry as angels nor as menials, but as teachers, messengers, ambassadors, servants of the Most High God, engaged in a work the most glorious and responsible of any consigned to mortals. Let us have a people who will fervently, regularly, and unitedly pray for the ministry; a people who will be slow to expose failings, and fast to approve excellencies; a people who will neither pamper or starve them; who will avoid odious comparisons; who will not speak evil of God's servants; who will not accept one at the sacrifice of another; who will recognise their own obligation to be holy, active, consistent, useful, as well as the ministry; who will work with them in all approvable ways in doing good. Let us have a people who will do these things, and the world shall see how far the Church can contribute to the efficiency and success of the ministry.

It is a grave mistake for a church to suppose that organs, choirs, ceremonies, order, or any such things are going to augment the power of the ministry. It is equally a mistake for it to suppose that learning, eloquence, thought, originality, respectability in the ministry is going to increase or recover its power. Desirable as these may be from the human side of the question, none, or all of them combined, will prove a remedy for the evil. It is not by human might or power, of whatever nature, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord. *Here is the grand remedy for the decay of power in the pulpit, both on the part of people and preachers.*

Expositions of some of the shorter Psalms.

BY THE REV. THORNLEY SMITH.

PSALM XVI.

THIS Psalm is called *Michtam* of David; a title given to five other Psalms—lvi.-lix—all which were from the same pen. By some the word is supposed to mean a *golden* Psalm; by others, a *secret*; and if the latter interpretation is correct, this Psalm proclaims, at the very onset, heights and depths which the Spirit only can reveal, and which He reveals *only* to His favoured people.

David was in great peril—in peril even of his life, such as that which is described in 1 Sam. xxvi.; but in the greatness of his distress, he poured forth the deep emotions of his soul in words of prayer and hope. He speaks here, however, as a prophet; for, as we shall hereafter see, it was Christ who uttered part of these words, and in Him specially that the hopes they express were fulfilled.

The first verse of the Psalm stands alone, and forms the substance of the whole. Ten verses follow in which the two thoughts of verse 1 are expanded and enlarged. These two thoughts are CONFIDENCE and HOPE.

I. CONFIDENCE. "Preserve me, O God," is the Psalmist's prayer; but it implies, "Thou wilt preserve me;" and in verses 2-7 the grounds on which this confidence rests are unfolded in a very striking manner.

1. *God is the supreme good.* Verses 2, 3. "I said to Jehovah, Thou art my Lord, I have no good beyond Thee." When the law was given on Mount Sinai God said to His people, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me;" and here is the echo to His words. This is the leading thought of the Psalm—there is no salvation out of God. He is the one centre of the soul; the one source of happiness; the one fountain of bliss. Beyond Him all is darkness, desolation, and woe; and were it possible to find a region where He is not, even though it seemed ever so attractive, beautiful, and fair, it would be a region of utter disquietude and unrest. And all God's people feel this. David took delight in them, and said, "These are the excellent of the earth," or, as some would render it, God's *nobility*. They recognise Him as the chief good; and God looks upon them as His choice possession. The true nobles of the land are not necessarily those who dwell in splendid mansions, and bear distinguished names, and can boast of an illustrious ancestry; for many of God's nobility are poor, and despised, and perse-

cuted, and trodden under foot; but He knows them, and He will preserve them, for they acknowledge Him as their all in all, and He has promised that no weapon formed against them shall prosper. Do you belong to the excellent of the earth—the true nobility of God? Perhaps you hesitate to reply; but if you can, indeed, say, “I have no good beyond Thee, O God, neither do I desire any,” you may claim the honour, and rejoice in it.

2. *Sorrow is the lot of those who trust in any other god.* Verses 4, 5. Other gods there were in the days of the psalmist, the gods of the heathens round about him; and their votaries poured out to them drink-offerings of blood, that is, served them with blood-stained hands, and blood-guilty consciences; but in doing this they only multiplied their griefs and added to their troubles; and David therefore would have no counsel with them, and the names of their idols he would not suffer to pollute his lips. Ex. xxviii. 13. Is it not true to this day that men who serve idols—the idols of the age, whatever they may be; the idols of the market, of the counting-house, of the family; the idols of fashion, wealth, or fame—multiply their sorrows a hundredfold? Are the men who hasten after these gods, and are ready to offer any sacrifice to them, men of quiet spirits and of contented minds? Their very countenances will often tell you they are not; and wise therefore is the man who cultivates David’s spirit and says, “Jehovah is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup; Thou maintainest my lot.” By the portion of his inheritance he meant *the land*; by the portion of his cup *provision* generally. But he did not refer to any earthly possessions he had gained; but to God Himself, who to him was more than all. Men of the world have their portion in the world, which at best consists of lands, and houses, and estates, none of which they can carry with them into the future; but the believer’s portion is the Lord Jehovah, and as Savanarola said, “What must not he possess, who possesses the possessor of all!” The Christian realises this, for he understands what the apostle meant, when he said, “All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” 1 Cor. iii. 21-23. And no creature can rob the believer of his patrimony. “Thou maintainest my lot,” says David, or “Thou makest my lot illustrious.” Rightful owners are sometimes thrust from their possessions, and the riches of this world often vanish, or take to themselves wings and fly away; but who can touch the Christian’s inheritance? The title deeds are in God’s possession, and the inheritance itself is reserved for him in heaven. His lot is therefore sure, his portion is therefore

abiding and eternal. Oh, seek not your best things here; for if you have them now, you cannot have them hereafter; if you have them in the world, you cannot have them in the Lord Jehovah. The man who *will* have his portion in this life *may* have it; but at the cost of forfeiting an everlasting portion in God. Luke xvi. 25.

3. *The believer's heritage is invaluable.* Ver. 6, 7. Here the psalmist confirms what he had already said, and glories in the possessions which God had vouchsafed to him. "The lines," he says, "have fallen to me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage." The land of Canaan was divided among the Israelites by lot; but measuring lines were used to mark off each one portion. To this fact David alludes, but he could have no reference here to Bethlehem, or to any other portion of the land literally, as if that was the heritage he thought so good. Oh, no; his were spiritual blessings. The Lord was his portion, and in Him he found true happiness and rest. Hence he says, "I will bless Jehovah, who hath given me counsel, my reins also instruct me in the night seasons." The reins are the emotions of the heart, and how often does the believer feel them, when, retiring from the noise and clamour of the world, he lays himself down upon his bed to rest. Sleep does not come immediately; but feelings do, thoughts do, recollections do, and by these he is reminded, perhaps, of the errors of the day gone by, or of the lessons which had been taught him by the providence of God. Let us learn, first, in what our goodly heritage consists; and secondly, to bless the Lord for the counsels He has given us, and to act upon them. They err who say, "We have a goodly heritage," only when their lot in life is pleasant, only when their barns are filled with plenty, only when their path is strewn with flowers. There is many an humble cottager, many a toil-worn labourer, many a patient sufferer, many a lonely widow, who can say, "The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places," and that with greater truth than any mere man of this world can say it. And why? Just because God is their portion, and that their highest happiness consists in the possession of Him whose all things are.

These, then, are the grounds of the psalmist's confidence; and now we come to the second part of this hymn, which expresses—

II. HOPE arising from this confidence: "In Thee do I put my trust." Verses 1 and 8-10. David felt assured—

1. *That he would not be moved.* Ver. 8. He had set God always before him, so that He, as a real living person, was ever at his right hand, and would not suffer him to fall. "It gives," says Luther, "such a fresh courage and undaunted heart, when one

has God always before one's eyes, that even adversity, the cross, and sufferings, will then be cheerfully encountered and borne. Further, such a faith can be overmastered and vanquished by no cross and no calamity." The bold reformer spoke from experience, and his experience has been that of many a tried and tempted one, and will be yet again. "I shall not be moved," may the Christian say, when assailed by the world, when attacked by Satan, when exposed to the most pitiless and most determined foes. I shall not be moved, for God is with me, and He, my ever-present and ever-faithful God, will hold me by His hand, and will be to me a shield and a defence. But who else can say this? Sometimes the wicked say it, and it seems that their mountain stands so strong that no force can touch it, and that it will survive the greatest shock. Presently, however, it trembles to its base, and ere long it falls, and they fall with it. "I shall not be moved," can no man say truly, but the man who knows, who feels, who is assured that the Lord Jehovah is at his right hand.

2. *That God would not leave him to perish.* Verses 9, 10. "Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." What David meant by these words has been matter of dispute; but he spoke prophetically, and their true import was given by St. Peter, when, on the day of Pentecost, he applied them to our Lord. In His lips only were they strictly true, for, though David was preserved amid the trials of this life, yet he went down into the grave, he saw corruption, and his soul was left in the unseen world. But Christ saw no corruption. His soul returned from the unseen world. The grave could not retain His body, Hades could not retain His spirit; He rose, and then He ascended up, and is now seated at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting until His enemies be made His footstool. Oh, blessed truth! Dimly foreshadowed to David, who, like Abraham, saw the day of Christ, and the triumphs of Christ, but saw them afar off—the fact has been clearly revealed to us, and forms the basis of all our hopes both for this life and the life that is to come. Our flesh, too, shall rest in hope; for though we shall see corruption, and though our souls shall enter the unseen land, yet this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and from that unseen land the soul shall return to take possession of its new-wrought frame. Does the believer go down to the grave in sorrow and despair? No; he knows that death is not even a suspension of his consciousness; that in the spirit world he will be with Christ, which is far better; and that the day will dawn when the archangel's trump shall resuscitate his

mortal frame, and when the mortal shall put on immortality, and death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed.

3. *That God would show Him the path of life.* Verse 11. According to St. Peter, Christ speaks still. His God would show Him the path of life, that He might show it again to others. It was so, for from death He was raised to life; and as He was about to enter it, He said to His disciples, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." John xiv. 4-6. And now He has left behind Him a bright track of light, by which His people may follow Him to that glorious abode where all life lives, and where no life dies. But what did David know of this? As much as this, at least, that his portion in God would not be temporary; and here, therefore, he expresses a hope of immortality, which, if not so bright as ours, was bright enough to cheer him amid the encircling gloom of life, and to gladden him with a prospect fair and beautiful. For what was the life which he anticipated? It was a life in God's presence, where there is fulness of joy; a life at God's right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore. David *did* probably, as one has represented, contrast the miserable heathenism, and its horrid rites of those times, with the pure worship of the Most High, which was celebrated on the heights of Zion; but he did more: he looked to the Zion of the everlasting hills, and there he saw joy in its fulness, and pleasures which would increase for ever, and, in holy hope, he aspired to their attainment. But if David did this, how much more may we? There is a path trodden by the feet of Jesus our Lord which will lead us to the presence-chamber of the Great King, and there unmixed joy, a full cup of joy (never put into our hands in this world), and pleasures that will never cease, but will roll on in an ever-swelling tide, shall be the portion of God's faithful ones. How this bright prospect has cheered the weary pilgrim in the years gone by! It cheered the psalmist and the prophets of the olden times, though to them it was comparatively dim; it cheered the apostles and early martyrs of the Church, to whom it had become brighter than the light of day; and it cheered the reformers of a later age and the saints of after times in this and in many other lands. One in the seventh century thus wrote—

"To others death seems dark and grim,
But not, Thou Life of life, to me:
I know Thou ne'er forsakest him
Whose heart and spirit rest in Thee.
Oh, who would fear his journey's close,
If from dark woods and lurking foes
He then find safety and release?"

Nay, rather, with a joyful heart
From this dark region I depart
To Thy eternal light and peace.

"O Friend of souls, then well indeed
Is me, when on Thy love I lean;
The world, nor pain, nor death, I heed,
Since Thou my God, my joy hast been.
Oh, let this peace that Thou hast given
Be but a foretaste of Thy heaven,
For goodness infinite is Thine.
Hence, world, with all thy flattering toys!
In God alone be all my joys;
Oh, rich delight, my Friend is mine!"

Can you adopt this strain, and make these words your own? Then are you happier than all the wealth of the world, all the titles of earth, all the glory of the age could make you; for yours is a portion which shall abide when all things else shall have for ever passed away.

Who and what is Christ?

A SERMON BY REV. DAVID STONER, NOT BEFORE PUBLISHED.

"What think ye of Christ?"—MATT. xxii. 42.

(Concluded from page 377.)

THE sacred writers taught—

III. THAT CHRIST WAS PERFECT MAN as well as perfect God, of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting. The same divine oracles that represent Him as God, do also, in many other passages, speak of Him in a very different and inferior character. He is called, "The Man of sorrows, acquainted with griefs." "The Offspring as well as the Root of David." The "Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus." He said of Himself, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." He was Man, for He had a body subject to all our innocent infirmities. The Evangelists tell us that He was conceived and born; that He was an infant, a Child; that He grew in wisdom and stature. He grew up by degrees, and was as far from being sustained without the accus-

tomed nutrition as our bodies are. That He was observed even by His enemies to come eating and drinking, and that when He did not so, He suffered from hunger and thirst. When He had fasted forty days in the wilderness, He was hungry. When He had sought fruit on the barren fig-tree, He was hungry. When He came to the well of Samaria, He was thirsty. On the cross He cried out, "I thirst." He was subject to weariness; on one occasion already mentioned, at the well of Samaria, He was weary. Passing over the lake with His disciples, He went down to the sides of the ship, and fell asleep. He was sensible of pain. The scourgers never doubted of the true nature of His flesh, who ploughed upon His back, and made long furrows there. The thorns that lacerated His sacred temples, the nails that penetrated through His hands and feet, and the spear which pierced His side, gave sufficient testimony of the natural tenderness and frailty of His flesh. And lest His fasting forty days and nights, lest His walking on the waters, and traversing the seas; lest His sudden standing in the midst of His disciples when the doors were shut, should raise an opinion that His body was not true and proper flesh, He said to His disciples, "Handle Me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." And we see that His body died, and laid under the power of death, until the third day. And certainly if the Son of God would vouchsafe to take the frailty of our flesh, He would not omit the nobler part, the soul, without which He could not be Man. For Jesus increased in wisdom as well as in stature; and wisdom belongeth not to the flesh, nor can the knowledge which God possesses, which is infinite, be capable of an increase. He, then, whose knowledge did improve together with His years, must have had a subject for it, which was no other than the human soul. This was the seat of His finite understanding, and His directed will, distinct from the will of His Father, and consequently from the will of His Divine nature, as appears from that language of submission which He used on the well-known occasion—"Not My will, but Thine be done." This was the subject of the affections and passions, which so manifestly appeared in Him, such as *sorrow*—"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death." *Joy*—"In that hour He rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid those things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." And *love*—"Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." *Wonder*—"For He marvelled at their unbelief." *Grief*—"He was grieved for the hardness of their hearts." His soul it was that on the cross, before His departure from the body, He recommended to the Father,

teaching us in whose hands the souls of the faithful are. "For when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit; and having said this, He gave up the ghost." And His death was nothing else but the separation of His soul from the body, as the life of Christ, as Man, consisted in the conjunction and vital union of the soul and body. So that these considerations authorise us to say that He who was perfect God was also perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. How this union took place between the divinity and humanity in the person of Christ our Mediator we cannot tell; and surely our ignorance on this subject (as we cannot explain the union between our own bodies and souls) can be no argument against its truth. He took upon Himself our nature, that He might be able, by His suffering, to vindicate the government of God, to preserve His purity immaculate, and satisfy the claims of injured justice. He became Man that in our nature, which had sinned, He might suffer and make an atonement for our sins. He took upon Him the form of a servant, and humbled Himself, that He might suffer, bleed, and die; for without shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin. He was human, that He might fulfil the law and make it honourable; and leave us a perfect example of spotless purity, unconstrained submission, and unsinning, unceasing obedience. He took upon Him our nature, that He might be acquainted with our innocent infirmities, and thus be made a perfect Priest, that He might be able to sympathise with His people in all their difficulties and temptations. He became Man, that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many might be made righteous." For simply considered as God, He could satisfy, but not suffer; considered as Man, He could suffer, but not satisfy; but as God-man, he could suffer and satisfy, and thus make an atonement for our sins. His divinity stamped the temporary sufferings of His humanity with an infinite worth and efficacy, so that they were a proper substitute and equivalent for the threatened penalty of all mankind.

The sacred writers represent Christ—

IV. AS A PROPHET SENT FROM HEAVEN TO INSTRUCT MANKIND IN THE WAY OF SALVATION. In this view it was that Moses prophesied of His coming. "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me:—" Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. In Christ this prophecy was accomplished; He was the great Teacher sent from God. With reference to Him he is styled "the Word;" as words are signs by which men communicate their ideas one to another. Christ is the Word by which God has fully revealed

His will to fallen men. He is called an "Apostle" and a "Witness," and all in reference to His prophetic office. And in fulfilling this office, in making Himself unto us wisdom, He uses various means. Amongst those is—

1. *The Bible.* This source of wisdom is the rule of our conduct and the standard of character. This book is a treasury of divine riches, a casket of celestial jewels, and a storehouse of good things; it is a hammer to break the flinty heart, a light to dispel our darkness, and a sword to cut off our sins and to pierce to the inmost soul. It has God for its Author, truth without any mixture of error for its matter, and the salvation of souls for its end. It contains every essential information of religion, everything requisite for life and godliness. It draws aside the impenetrable veil that conceals the otherwise unknown world, and we can, assisted as with a glass, cast our eyes on either side of this impassable gulf that divides hell and heaven. By this Book life and immortality have been brought to light; the vast and unbounded prospect lies before us, and now no longer darkness clouds and shadows rest upon it. That thick haze which covered eternity is removed, and we can look through and beyond the valley of the shadow of death. Here is declared the infinite, incomprehensible nature, the natural perfections, and the moral attributes of Deity. Here is described the primitive condition, the original holiness, the happiness of man, together with his lamentable fall and all its consequences. Here is contained the amazing plan of redemption, the redemption of a lost, ruined race through the atonement of Jehovah Jesus. Here is delineated our natural condition as children of wrath; our depravity, our guilt, our sinfulness, our danger, our helplessness, and total inability to avert the displeasure of the Almighty, and to save ourselves from ruin. And not only our sickness, but our remedy in the plan of salvation is declared; not by works of righteousness that we have done or can do, but through faith in the blood of our Mediator. Here is the law of our lives in all its spirituality, in all its sanctions, and all its requirements. Here is information of the duties we are to fulfil, the obligations we are to discharge, the commands we are to obey, the difficulties we are to surmount, and the enemies we are to conquer. Here are many precious promises that we may inherit; and if this is not the case, here are awful threatenings that must be executed in our destruction. Here is revealed the immortality of the soul, the certainty of the resurrection, the impartiality of the judgment, heaven in all its bliss, hell in all its terrors. Here we may listen to the singing of the innumerable company "Worthy is the Lamb to receive honour, and power, and riches, and wisdom, and glory, and blessing;" or

the dreadful shrieks of the finally impenitent, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

In addition to this Christ has established—

2. *A Gospel ministry* in the Church. He has raised up men, given them a commission, and qualifications, and appointed them to instruct their fellow-creatures in the great truths revealed in the Bible. And besides these outward means and ordinances, there is—

3. *The influence of the Holy Spirit*, which renders the outward means effectual, and from this they derive all their energy and success. And by those means Christ instructs His disciples, and makes them wise unto salvation. He teaches them to know themselves as lost, undone, unworthy creatures. He teaches them to look into their past lives, into their hearts, and into their present state. And they find that they have been rebels against God's government, and despisers of His person and perfections; that they have sinned against their Maker with a high hand, and an arm stretched out; that their hearts are depraved, corrupt, and impure; that the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint; that now they are exposed to God's displeasure, and obnoxious to His wrath, and that independently of God's Spirit they have no power to conceive a good thought, to speak a good word, or perform one righteous deed. He instructs them also how to come unto God through His all-prevailing name. He shows them the way of faith, He removes their guilt, He fills them with peace and joy in believing, He carries on the work He has begun, and teaches them how to glorify their Maker, how to work out their own salvation, and how to be useful to their fellow-creatures.

The sacred writers set Jesus Christ forth—

V. UNDER THE CHARACTER OF A PRIEST. And it is only on this ground that the amazing sufferings of Christ can be accounted for. He offered up Himself as an oblation and sacrifice to satisfy the claims of justice for us, and to deliver us from going down to the pit of perdition. We are taught from the Scriptures that His sufferings were *vicarious*; that He did not endure them on His own account, but on our account. For what was there in Him that merited any suffering? There was no depravity in His nature, no guile in His mouth, no guilt in His life, no stain on His character. His most malicious enemies could find no sin in Him. He Himself proposed the question, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin." But none of them could answer in the affirmative. When He was arraigned before the Sanhedrim, many witnesses came against Him, but they were false witnesses. If then Christ was perfectly innocent and holy, why did He suffer, and suffer in such a great degree? The

Scriptures only can answer this question ; this difficulty can only be solved on the ground of *substitution*. He suffered not for Himself, but for us, in our room and stead. He was our High-Priest, and offered for us a sacrifice, even the sacrifice of Himself on the altar that sanctifieth the gift, in His own Divine nature. It is true, under the Mosaic dispensation the priest presented the sacrifice for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people ; but as Christ had no sin, and knew no sin, He made no atonement for Himself, but for our sins. Hence, says the prophet, "He is despised and rejected of men : a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs." But why ? Was it for His own crimes ? No. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." And of course the sufferings of Christ were *voluntary*. Salvation is no less said to be the result of the Son's love, than of the Father's mercy. It is true that God is often said to have given His Son, and yet Christ is said to have offered or have given Himself. God is said to have sent His Son, and yet Christ is said to have come. No coercive measures needed or could have been used with the everlasting Son by the Father to cause Him to redeem a lost world. The same unbounded, unlimited, infinite, inexpressible, everlasting grace and charity that moved God the Father to give His Son, also moved the Son to offer Himself. These three, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one, and consequently must have one mind, one will, one counsel, one design. And as there was a Divine unanimity and oneness of counsel in the creation of man ("Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"), so there would be the same union in the work of redemption. It is said, "God so loved the world," &c., and yet it is equally said of Christ, "Who gave Himself," &c. "God spared not His own Son," &c. "There is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." It is said that "God sent His Son into the world, that the world through Him might be saved." "And yet it is said that Christ came unto His own, and His own received Him not." He offered Himself as our substitute, as our oblation, saying, "Lo ! I come, in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O God." On one occasion we find that Christ affirmed strongly that His sufferings were *voluntary*, "I lay down My life, and I take it again ; no man taketh it from Me, I lay it down of Myself. I have power

to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." After He had been agonising in the garden, He simply said to His enemies, "I am He," and they staggered and fell to the ground. And even in His lowest condition, when He was on the cross, it was not the puny force of men, it was not the rugged nails which kept Him suspended there, it was pure love. Had He been so minded, could He not have arisen with all the majesty of God, and, exerting His power, could He not in a moment have dissolved the whole frame of nature, have banished the demons of darkness to their own sulphureous gulf, have driven all the guilty sons of men with them, blotted the bright orb of day from the firmament, shaken the stars of heaven as leaves from a fig-tree, and suffered universal ruin and final havoc to drive her ploughshare through the universe? Who for a moment dares doubt it? But He laid down His life of Himself. He had power to lay it down, and He had power to take it again.

The atonement which He made was *satisfactory*. He actually accomplished the work He undertook, the claims of justice were satisfied to the uttermost, our debt was paid to the full. Of this we have sufficient evidence. Christ Himself exclaimed, "It is finished." Our atonement was finished, it was completed, for He surrendered His spirit into the hands of the Father. His resurrection is a certain demonstration of the same truth. He burst the barriers of the tomb, and rose victorious in evidence of His acquittal. The debt was paid, the prisoner was therefore liberated. And in addition to this, He ascended on high; leading captivity captive, He received gifts for men, purchased by His own blood, and He proved that He had both purchased and received them, by pouring them out on the day of Pentecost.

The atonement that He made was *universal*. A satisfaction for all the sins of all mankind. He was a "propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." He by the grace of God "tasted death for every man;" "who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." There is efficacy in the blood of Christ to atone for our sins, if they had been ten thousand times more numerous, ten thousand times more aggravated than they are. And as our great High-Priest, He is presenting the atonement which He made before the Majesty on high, and there He ever liveth to make intercession for us—

"He ever lives above,
For us to intercede;
His all redeeming love,
His precious blood to plead.
His blood atoned for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace."

The Bible represents Christ—

VI. As OUR KING. "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulders." "I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." He is the "King of kings, and Lord of lords." His "throne is in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all." He governs the universe. He holds the reins of universal dominion, and sways His sceptre over all. The cherubim and seraphim cast their crowns before Him; they acknowledge His supremacy, and their dependence upon Him for life, and felicity, and all things. The hosts of heaven attend upon His pleasure, and are even ready to do His will. Creation at large obeys His nod. The sun, moon, and planetary worlds silently and steadily pursue their courses appointed for them by the Governor of all things. Our little earth follows His directions, and gives us the returns of day and night, summer and winter. "He stretcheth out the north over the empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at His reproof; He sitteth above the waterfloods, and weigheth the hills in a balance. He taketh up the isles as a very little thing. Hell is naked before Him, and destruction has no covering. Devils believe and tremble; for to them He assigns limits that they cannot exceed. He can say to them with the same ease as to the foaming, dashing billows of the tempestuous ocean, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." He governs the rational beings in the world. All men are under His control. He supports them in existence, and preserves them in their present mode of being. Though they may be wicked and perverse, He can put a hook in their nose, and a bridle in their jaws, and turn them whatever way He sees fit. He causes the wrath of men to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He can restrain. Even their very struggles against His designs He can overrule to promote His providential dispensations.

He is the King of His Church. The Church is the body, of which He is the Head. The Church is the kingdom, of which He is the Ruler. He possesses legislative authority; He has appointed laws; these laws He has promulgated. To those He has added sanctions. To those laws He requires obedience; and all those laws His faithful, willing subjects obey. And as He possesses executive authority, He will reward them for their fidelity by raising them to an eternal kingdom. He is King over His Church, to defend them from their enemies, to supply their wants, to give them protection, support, and happiness. He is King in the heart of every Christian. He, the stronger man, who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, enters

the heart of the penitent sinner, He binds the strong man, spoils his goods, and casts him out. He enters himself, He makes that heart His home, His abode, His throne. He sets up His spiritual kingdom, "which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." He reigns without a rival, the Lord of the whole soul, the Governor of every motion, passion, and affection.

The sacred writers represent Christ—

VII. AS OUR GREAT PATTERN AND EXAMPLE. "Be ye followers of me," saith St. Paul, "as I also am of Christ." Christ is the Model after which every Christian is formed, for, says St Peter, "He left us an example, that ye should follow His steps." St. Paul tells us that we must be conformed to the image of God's dear Son; that the same mind must be in us that was also in Christ Jesus. But in treading in His footsteps we should carefully distinguish between what was miraculous in Christ's conduct, and peculiar to Him as the Son of God, and Mediator between God and man, and what was done in obedience to the law of God that was common to Him and us. We should know when He acted as our Example, and when He acted peculiarly as the Son of God.

He is set before us as a pattern of *purity*. He was perfect—without sin, without guile, without impurity, and without hypocrisy. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." We are to imitate in Him His *humility*. It is principally to this virtue the words of the apostle, already quoted, refer—"Let the same mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." What humility was this, that the King of kings should vouchsafe to be condemned, to be less esteemed than Barabbas the murderer, to be crucified between two thieves, as though He was the ringleader of all malefactors! Copy His *meekness* and *patience*. "When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him who judgeth the earth righteously." In all His suffering, unruffled meekness and immovable patience governed His soul. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." And when His enemies had poured upon Him every possible variety of contempt and indignity, He outcried them in their blasphemies—"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Seek after *resignation* like His. When the cup (who can tell its ingredients?) was presented to Him to drink—the cup of God's wrath, one drop of which

would have blasted our hopes, withered our joys, and transfixed us in unutterable agony for ever in the flames of hell, He said, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." Human nature shrunk from the untold task, yet He said, "Not My will, but Thine be done." Imitate Him in *zeal* for the honour of God. His heart glowed with love to His Father; He delighted in universal obedience to Him. It was His meat and drink to do His will, even in the most painful and self-denying instances. He abounded in devotion, in prayer, meditation, fasting, and every religious duty. Imitate Him in His love to men. He went about doing good—benevolence filled His holy soul. Benevolence to the bodies and the souls of men was the business of His life. He endeavoured to banish misery and wretchedness in every form from the haunts and habitations of men. He was instant in season and out of season, meek and lowly, kind and benevolent, just and charitable, merciful and compassionate. He was a dutiful Son, a loyal subject, and a faithful Friend; a good Master, and an active, useful, public, spirited member of society.

The sacred writers represent Him—

VIII. AS OUR FUTURE JUDGE. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son." "He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness," &c. "The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven in a flame of fire," &c. When the fulness of time shall arrive, He shall mount His great white throne, and, attended by all heaven's host, He will descend to judge the world. The trumpet shall be sounded, and the dead shall be raised, the earth and all its pomps and splendours shall be burnt, and all mankind shall be caught up in the air to meet the omniscient Judge. All the sons and daughters of men shall pass in regular rotation under His scrutinizing eye. He will separate the righteous from the wicked as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats. He will bless His own, saying, "Come, ye blessed of My Father." Lift up your heads, oh ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the heirs of glory may come in. He will curse His enemies—"Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," &c.

This subject affords—

1. *Matter of careful examination by every individual.* What think ye of Christ? For just as you think of Christ, Christ thinks of you. If you think Christ to be the fairest among ten thousand, and love Him supremely, He also will love you. You will be one of His darlings, an object of His care, an object of His saving mercy. But if you think lightly of Christ, and His salvation, He cannot love you. He may protract your day of probation for a little while, to the intent that you may repent

of your folly ; but if you persist in pouring contempt upon His mercy, He will bruise you with a rod of iron. What think ye of Christ ? Not merely in a speculative manner, but in a practical, experimental manner. Christ as a Prophet, you know, but do you know Him to be your Prophet ? Has He instructed you concerning your sins ? Have you been made wise unto salvation ? He is a Priest. You know it. But is He your Priest ? Is He your King ? Is He your Pattern ? You do not think well of Christ in any sense of the phrase, if you neglect His salvation, if you prefer the pleasures of this world. It is preposterous to say you think well of Christ, if you do not make use of Him. What do you say of the dying man, labouring under a mortal disease, if he tells you that he thinks well of his physician, that he both can and is desirous to cure him, and yet at the same time refuses to follow his prescriptions. Avoid the Socinian error ; remember, Christ is a Priest as well as a Prophet. Avoid the Antinomian error ; Christ is a King as well as a Priest.

2. Here you find matter of *serious alarm* to those who have not made Christ their Friend and Saviour. Christ is infinitely dear to God, and He will not suffer Him to be dishonoured without avenging the affront. Christ is not only a Lamb, He is a Lion. He is just as well as merciful ; holy as well as compassionate. He has threatenings as well as promises ; thunderbolts as well as mercies.

3. Matter of *encouragement* to those who are seeking after the salvation of Christ. He came into the world for no other purpose than to save sinners. Every office He bears has salvation for its end.

4. Matter of *congratulation* for those who have Christ for their portion. In Christ, and with Christ, and because of Christ, and through Christ, you will have all things. Are you ignorant ? Christ is your Teacher. Are you in darkness ? Christ is your Sun of Righteousness. Are you a lost sheep ? Christ is a Shepherd. Are you sick ? He is a Physician. Are you thirsty ? He is a Fountain of living waters. Are you hungry ? He is the Manna and the Bread of heaven—angels' food. Have you enemies ? He is the Captain. Have you to go through a wilderness ? He is your Guide.

Holmfirth, November 3, 1815.

Materials for Sermons.

XXXIII.—DISEASES OF THE SOUL.

MARK v. 25-34.

AT this particular stage in our Saviour's course, miracles crowd upon His pathway. He has cast out a legion of devils in the country of the Gadarenes; and the people, terrified that there should be in their midst a person who could do such mighty works, came to Jesus, beseeching Him to leave them. Christ did so, recrossing to Capernaum with His disciples. As the boat drew near, the people assembled in great numbers on the shore to see Jesus again. Jairus heard the news, and at once sent a messenger to Him. The message was that He would come and heal the ruler's daughter, who lay at the point of death. Jairus being a considerable person—no less than the ruler of the synagogue—his residence was doubtless at the foot of the hill, where olive-trees grew, so that Jesus, on His way to the ruler's house, would have to pass through the town. He is on His way thither, where the incident the text records occurred. Here is a poor woman who, it seems, had some property once; perhaps she was an heiress in her own right; perhaps she was a widow, but that is less likely; she is still afflicted with an incurable disease, though she has spent all her substance on physicians. Wan, sickly, feeble, and despondent, looking more like a dead thing than a living woman, she ventures, strong in faith, to press through the crowd, that she may touch the hem of Christ's garment, and be made whole. Naturally enough, she does not want the crowd to know what her affliction is. She touches the hem, and is made whole. She becomes vigorous, and is possessed of the health of middle life. She is turning away, with deep, suppressed gladness, to tell her friends—those on whose charity she had probably depended in her sickness—but a voice speaks—"Who was it that touched Me?" Jesus turns and looks through the crowd, until He fixes His eye upon her. She has turned to look at Jesus; for had she continued to go towards home, her departure, at the time, would have excited suspicion; so she turns round to look as the other people did. "Who was it that touched Me?"

No answer. Simon Peter naturally thought the question was a strange one to put in an eddying circling crowd, and he said as much. "Who *touched Me?*" The meaning is, a deliberate taking hold, though a gentle touch. Christ, however, perceived that virtue had gone out of Him. He so presses the question, that this susceptible woman sees there is nothing for it but to go forward and tell all the truth. She does so—at His feet—telling Him what her sorrow had been, how she had made bold to creep up to Him, and take hold of the hem of His garment, and how her sickness at once ceased. Words of richest consolation and cheering words amply rewarded her; and she goes home then to tell her friends all that the Lord had done for her.

That is the history. Here are the lessons it teaches. The power that puts the body right can also reach the centre of being—the soul—our inner life. We have before us—

First: A singularly striking symbolical representation of *that which is the state and case of every sinner*. She suffered from an inward constitutional disease, incurable by human physicians, everyone of whom held out hopes of her cure; but all their pretences she had found to be vain. There was no refuge left but Jesus.

Is not this our own case? We have this inward disease, taint of blood, this sinful self, "this law in our members which wars against law in our minds," this love of sin, this hatred of the whole law of God. We cannot, however, much as we may wish, disguise the fact. Evil is present with us when we would do good. We try to restrain it, but it breaks out afresh. Passion has its way. We feel the need of coming to Jesus; for a pure nature, a loving mind, and all those graces of His Spirit which can be got nowhere but through Him.

Many troubled with this soul disease have resorted to various remedies short of the only real one, Christ. One man is painfully, bitterly sad. He asks a friend's advice. "You want change of air, constant occupation, whether in business or pleasure, or in an alternation of these." For a season it seems as if he gets some relief; but a man cannot always be turning the wheel, nor can he always be gay. There are deep stirrings within him as to the everlasting future that make him a wretched, foreboding, and as helpless as ever.

Another man, who wishes to be delivered from the power of

evil habit, is advised to have more self-control. "What you want," says his friend, "is a better training, more culture, more enlightenment." But what can philosophy, or elegant literature, or high culture do? Can it minister to a heart and soul diseased? Can it pluck from the breast a rooted sorrow? Can it purge from the conscience the deep stain of guilt of sin? In human philosophy there is no power even to mould the character thoroughly. It may give the outside polish, but not bring us to the pure fountain. We know what Christ says about the "outward platter." Not an outward application, but something more is required to get at and cure the constitutional disease of sin.

Other advisers, admitting the seriousness of the case, and that none but a religious remedy will suffice, prescribe that you should conform to the Church's rule, attend frequently the means of grace—daily, if you can, the public, open means of grace connected with the Church; that you should take the sacrament weekly, or oftener; and thus, they say, you will find salvation, you will find the consolation of a pacified conscience, and all that is ever to be expected in the way of a new heart.

If you seek all these things and forget Christ, you will do no better than the woman would have done had she taken our Lord's cast-off garment, and touching it, expected thereby to be saved. Vain and frivolous are all those human remedies. Christ showed the emptiness of them all by healing the woman whom no earthly physician could cure. And like her, we must come to Him at last for the cure of this terrible disease of sin.

We believe in a present Saviour, without a priest to make Him present; and so believing, we may realise His presence at the means of grace. It is there that we touch the hem of His garment, and are made whole. We must come in absolute reliance on Him.

II. Observe, next, *the nature of this salvation*. "She felt in herself that she was healed of that plague. The fountain of her blood was staunched"—a new life was put in her. That's just what we want. We want what we cannot get by arguing—by mental culture—by association of ideas. *We want a new life*. As St. Paul says, "We need that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus should make us free from the law of sin and death;" or, as the Psalmist hath it—"Create in me," we

should cry—"Create in me a clean heart, O God; renew a right spirit within me." Also, "Thou desireth truth in the inward parts." Again, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean." Not that for once and for ever there is an end of the old life. God knows how some of us have been fighting and struggling for years and years with the remains of the old man—more shame to us that the years have been so long, and progress so little. Not that the old man is swept away at a stroke, but that the new is installed by the grace of the Divine Spirit. Let, then, all the evil effects of our nature be supplanted by the new and blessed life in Christ.

Observe that this woman was conscious of the healing done to her. The colour came to her wan face, strength took the place of feebleness, and health supplanted disease. She was a new woman. So with sinners at Christ's feet. "The love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them." They feel that an entire change has come over them. "They have joy and peace through believing." O Lord, I will praise Thee: Thou wast angry with me, but now Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me."

Further observe, the Lord insisted on this woman bearing clear testimony. She shrank back naturally enough. It was painful to her. But the Lord would have her do it; so to speak, he dragged the testimony out of her, and she was amply compensated by the rich blessings He gave to her.

You see the good effects of bearing testimony. Others heard her, and glorified God. They were encouraged to bring sick folk to Christ, and even to come themselves, if they felt the need of a physician. She got good for herself, too, by bearing her testimony to the great mercy shown to her.

Remember, when you feel disposed to shrink back, that you owe something to the Lord—to Him who has done such great things for you, and that you will bring glory to Christ's name by your testimony.

Two or three more lessons: Christ was going up and down the streets of Capernaum, attended by a great crowd. He is amongst us still. We hear what He says; and we see what He does. And there is a crowd, too. Many persons look on from curiosity merely, and are worse rather than better for it. Others are touched, and are coming to Christ. Thank God, there is salvation for them all!

DR. RICE.

XXXIV.—SPIRITUAL LIBERTY AND SERVITUDE.

"Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."—Rom. vi. 18.

I. SPIRITUAL FREEDOM. This is expressed in the text by the words, "Free from sin." We must guard against a latitudinarian view of this phrase. It does not for instance imply—
 1. Freedom from the *world of sin*. While we live we must in some sort be in this world where sin has a reign and influence.
 2. From the *presence of sin*. Sin will meet us and look us in the face frequently, if not always, in most places and persons.
 3. From *temptation to sin*. Our Lord was tempted. We cannot expect to be free from this.
 4. From the *possibility of sinning*. This we find from experience, from the examples of Scripture and the Church, from the teachings and admonitions of God's word.
 5. From *humiliating and penitent remembrances of sin*. David thus remembered his sin. Paul. Experience.
 6. From *some physical consequences of sin*. Pains, aches, afflictions, death.
 7. In heaven only shall we be free from sin in these respects.

This spiritual freedom does imply—
 1. Freedom from the *guilt of sin*, in the removal of it.
 2. From *condemnation* in pardon and justification.
 3. From its *fears*, dread of God, fear of death and hell, &c.
 4. From its *miseries*.
 5. From the *dominion and service of sin*. Sin hath no more dominion over us. We are not bound to serve it in any way or degree. See context.
 6. From *its present and future punishment*.
 7. From *the claims of the law as a means of salvation*. We are saved by grace. The law has no longer hold of us. Made free from the law of sin and death.
 8. *Freedom from sin*. Much said about freedom of thought, of speech, of action, &c., in these days, but the highest, happiest, noblest freedom in the universe is freedom from sin. This is the freedom of the Spirit of God, of angels, of all the grand, beautiful, and useful in the universe.

II. SPIRITUAL SERVITUDE. "Ye became servants of righteousness."

Man's condition in this world or any other must be one of service. He cannot escape this. The only question for him to decide is, Which shall it be, a service of sin, or a service of righteousness? It must be one or the other. If he serve sin, he cannot serve righteousness, and *vice versa*. He cannot serve God

and Mammon. To be freed from the service of sin, is to enter into the service of righteousness. This implies—1. *Being made righteous*. 2. Loving righteousness. 3. The practice of righteousness, according to revealed righteous laws, in all ways and at all times, faithfully, fearlessly aiming at perfection of service. 4. *Righteousness is your King and Master*, “The Lord our righteousness. 5. This service is the highest, happiest, and noblest service in which man can be engaged. It is the service of God, of the holy angels, of all the true and good, in every age and place. It is self-commending and self-rewarding. It blesses him who is in it and those around it. It shall not lose its reward hereafter.

III. THE TIME OF EMANCIPATION. “Being *then*” that is as stated in the seventeenth verse, “when they obeyed that form of doctrine which was delivered unto them.” Which form of doctrine may be easily gathered from the context and previous chapters. 1. Received as a truth the doctrine of their personal depravity and the insufficiency of the law to save. 2. Received and practised the doctrine of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 3. The personal, hearty, practical reception of this truth brings freedom from *sin*. “*Obedied from the heart*.” *Faith in Jesus* secures the power which breaks off the chains, and gives the glorious liberty. *Then*, whenever it is, wherever it is, the chains fall off and the soul is free. Glorious day, hour, moment!

“*Being then*.” It is well to be reminded of the time of our deliverance. It is well to remember it in our meditations, prayers, praises. As the negro in the West Indies, as America in her independence, and as a captive liberated from a long, miserable slavery, keep a day of commemoration of the one in which they escaped, so should we. It would be a help heavenward. It would cherish love to our freedom, and gratitude to our Deliverer.

Conclusion—1. Some of you are in this freedom. Rejoice in it. Go not back to bondage. 2. Others of you are in this bondage. Pray to your King. Believe the truth He sends you. He tells you to be free.

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XXXV.—GAIN OF THE WORLD AND LOSS OF THE SOUL.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
—MARK viii. 36, 37.

IN this text we have a gain and a loss stated, and a profit inquired after.

I. *The gain of the world*—that is, the gain of its *knowledge*, of its *wisdom*, of its *pleasures*, of its *wealth*, of its *powers*, of its *honours*, of its *associations*.

Many gain *some* of these things; very few gain *all* of them, and no *one* gains the whole of each, so that none is left for another. The Saviour *supposes* a man to gain the whole world, in order to show more vividly the loss.

II. *The loss of the soul*—that is, the loss of its faculties, so that they cannot exercise themselves unto godliness; the loss of its purity, and all prospect of recovering it; the loss of it to *hope*; the loss of it to *happiness*; the loss of it to heaven; the loss of it to man's own control and government; the loss of it in guilt, pollution, slavery, misery, and hell.

III. *The profit inquired after*—"What shall it profit?" &c. Where is the auditor that will even make the accounts balance, to say nothing of *profit*? One way of looking for an answer to this question may be by comparing the *good* in the gain with the *evil* in the loss.

I. The *good* which is in the gain is chiefly *imaginary* and *fanciful*; the *evil* in the loss is *real* and *substantial*.

II. The *good* in the gain is *limited* and *particular*; the *evil* in the loss is *vast* and *universal*.

III. The *good* in the gain is capable, and often is turned into *great evil*; the *evil* in the loss *can never be changed into any good*.

IV. The *good* in the gain is *mixed* and *adulterated*; the *evil* in the loss is *pure* and *unmitigated*.

V. The *good* in the gain is full of *intermissions*; the *evil* in the loss is *unchangeable* and *continuous*.

VI. The *good* in the gain is *short* and *fleeting*; the *evil* in the loss is *everlasting*.

Is there a *wise* man who will run the risk of the loss by seeking the gain?

The second verse in the text may be considered applicable

to the case of a man who has lost his soul; lost it in sin; lost it in Satanic power; lost it in worldliness; lost it to hope and grace. He has gained the world, but lost his soul. Now, with all his gain, what has he that he can offer in exchange for his soul again? The answer is, nothing that he has in part or altogether would be taken as an equivalent for his soul. The powers which hold his soul will not give it up for all that he has. The redemption of the soul is more precious than all he can offer. Its redemption is at first only by Christ's sacrifice on the cross; and its redemption now from its lost state can only be by repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, bringing the grace of God to bear upon it. Herein is the only hope for the recovery of a lost soul in this life.

But if the phrase "lose his own soul" refer to the future life, then we must say that there is nothing in heaven or earth, with man or with God, that can be offered in exchange for the soul. *It is lost for ever.* *

Illustrations, &c.

THE WORTH OF THE SOUL.—A person lately deceased, and who possessed a speculative acquaintance with Divine truth, had, by unremitting industry, and carefully watching every opportunity of increasing his wealth, accumulated the sum of twenty-five thousand pounds. But alas! he became engrossed and entangled with the world, and to its acquisitions he appears to have sacrificed infinitely higher interests. A dangerous sickness, that brought death near to his view, awakened his fears. Conscience reminded him of his neglect of eternal concerns, and filled him with awful forebodings of future misery. A little before he expired, he was heard to say, "My possessions amount to twenty-five thousand pounds. One-half of this my property I would give, so that I might live one fortnight longer, to repent and seek salvation; and the other half I would give to my dear and only son."

CONSTANTINE AND THE MISER.—Constantine the Great, in order to reclaim a miser, took a lance, and marked out a space of ground of the size of the human body, and told him, "Add heap to heap, accumulate riches upon riches, extend the bounds of your possessions, conquer the whole world, and in a few days such a spot as this will be all you will have."

LAYING UP EARTHLY TREASURE.—A recent writer affords the

following impressive contrast: " 'Is this all of life?' So said a man of wealth, as, laying upon a sick-bed, he looked back over fifty years—fifty years of pleasure and ease. He had loved dear friends, and they were dead. He had cherished great hopes, and they were not all realised; still his life had seemed happier than most of his fellows. But he had lived for self, not for Christ; he had laid up his treasure on earth, not in heaven; and now, as he looked back on fifty years, they seemed a blank; and as he looked forward, a darker unknown blank obscured his vision. An aged Christian, just as he was passing away, said, 'I am just beginning to live. This life is not all of life, it is only the first step.' "

WHAT IS THE SOUL?—A city missionary one Sunday entered a beer-shop with a few little books in his pocket, and taking out one, which was a dialogue, offered to read it in parts with a man who stood near. "Oh, yer one of the soul-mongers!" said one of his companions. "Always at it! talkin' of what yer don't understand. I'd like to know what is a soul? Come, old fellow, can yer tell us that?" Attention was aroused, and the answer to "Bill's" question was waited for with some curiosity. "My friend," said the missionary, "a man generally asks a question for one of three reasons: either he cares to get an answer, or he asks from curiosity, or he wants to puzzle the questioner." A knowing wink from Bill to his mate showed that the last suggestion had hit the mark. "Yes, I see," said the missionary, "you want to puzzle me, to show me up; now, you know, two can play at that game, and before I answer you, will you be so good as to tell me what are the component parts of oxygenated muriatic acid of lime?" Silence for a moment, then a nudge and a chuckle on the part of a mate. "Eh, Bill, he's got yer there!" "You can't tell me? Well, at least, repeat my question—what was it I asked you?" Bill hardly liked to give in, and turned his head from side to side in a vain effort to recall the words. "Can't you say?" inquired the missionary. "I'm a-thinkin'." "Thinking, are you? With what? Your finger-ends—the hair on your head? What is it in you that thinks?" "Caught you, Bill! the old fellow's caught you, he has!" chimed in another neighbour. "I have answered you, my friend; what thinks, is your soul." He then took occasion to speak of its immortality and its redemption to his listeners, who were now all eager in their attention.

See an outline on this subject in *Lay Preacher*, vol. iii., p. 25.

Thoughts for a Missionary Speech.

THE SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.

THE power of an institution may be judged by its success, and the opposition with which it has had to contend in gaining its success. The mission cause has had the greatest opposition which the greatest evil beings and things in the universe could bring against it. Keeping this in view, and then contemplating its success, no impartial mind can pronounce it a failure, but the noblest success, which could only be obtained by a cause which has God for its Author, its life, and its end.

The success of missions from the beginning is too wide a subject to be embraced in one address; we will therefore limit our remarks to the success of missions since the commencement of the present century.

“A retired missionary,” writing on this subject, says—

1. At that time all Polynesia was heathen. There was not a native Christian in all these lovely islands, nor a man or woman who could read or write. Infanticide, human sacrifices, cannibalism, and most destructive wars were common. “Now not fewer than two hundred islands have been Christianised. In most of them idolatry has ceased to exist, and the people, with few exceptions, have declared themselves Christian. In these islands, missionaries and native pastors and preachers are steadily and successfully carrying on a great work. Education is everywhere advancing, barbarous customs are disappearing, and the people are making progress in the arts of civilisation. An aggregate of 500,000 are nominally Christian, 60,000 are in full communion with the churches; and we can think of 50,000 more safe in heaven, as the result of missionary work in years gone by. There are scores of other islands, where missionary and native evangelists have planted the banner of the cross, and steadily and successfully are gaining the same peaceful and beneficent victories—and all this has been done for less than a million sterling—far less than the cost of one mile of railway in London.”

2. In the West Indies slavery has been abolished, and Christianity so diffused that fairly it may be called the religion of the community, and education, which formerly was denied to the people, is now the heritage of tens of thousands.

3. Missions have been planted on several parts of the coast of Africa, from Sierra Leone all round to Natal especially; and whilst the tribes in the extreme south have been largely evangelised, the Gospel has penetrated two thousand miles north of

Cape Town. Not less than a quarter of a million Africans are now professing Christians, and the number is steadily growing.

4. Madagascar affords perhaps the most triumphant proof on record of the success of modern missions. The wondrous history is recorded in Ellis's "*Martyr Church of Madagascar.*" It is but fifty-one years since the mission was commenced, and during more than half that period bitter persecution prevailed, and no missionary was allowed to live on the island during all that time; and until within the last twelve years no schools or churches existed, no Christian worship was permitted, and no profession of Christianity was safe; now there are 2,000 native preachers, more than 230,000 adherents, 21,000 of whom are communicants; whilst 16,000 children are well taught in Christian schools. In each of these particulars the numbers multiply every year with a rapidity which is as striking as it is gratifying. Schools and churches are being built, Christian congregations gathered in scores of places, and school books and Scriptures are needed as fast as they can be printed. Idolatry indeed is rapidly disappearing, and Christianity is taking its place.

5. In Burmah the progress made has been great and remarkable. It is not sixty years since Dr. Judson commenced his great work there, and the number of missionaries has always been small, but they have more than 100,000 converts, 20,000 of whom are communicants, and 400 at least preachers and pastors.

6. In China it is as great as fairly we ought to expect; in Egypt, Turkey, and Syria this is also the case; but I must not weary you with details. I will, however, refer to India, for there missions are carried on most extensively, and nowhere is there a fairer or a grander field for their operation. The number of foreign Protestant missionaries there is one to 330,000 of the people, that is, one to a population and an area equal to that of such English counties as Cornwall, Worcester, and Suffolk. Now, on what ground, Scriptural, moral, or philosophical, are Christians justified in expecting large results, when they send such deplorably inadequate means, against the most ancient, subtle, corrupt, and compact polytheism the world has ever seen?

7. Previous to 1793, there never were twelve missionaries at one time in India, and the labours of these were confined to a very small portion of the empire. I question if for thirty years after the above date, the average number of missionaries was 100, or one to two millions of people; and during the last fifty years the average number of labourers has been much below what now it is. Most inadequate as these agencies clearly have been, they have wrought wonders. They have converted, and now have as their helpers in Christian work more than 2,000 native

preachers and teachers, whilst around them has been gathered a Christian population of above 250,000, a fifth of whom are communicants. And there has been for the past fifty years a steady and accelerated advance, not only in the number of converts, but in their intelligence and social position.

8. The indirect success of Christianity is yet more marked. There are tens of thousands who are not far from the kingdom of heaven, who are familiar with Christian truth, and whose opinions and lives are materially influenced by it. In no country is there a more thorough, necessary, and widespread moral and social revolution taking place, and Christianity is the cause of it. Infanticide is greatly abated; female education is spreading; widow marriages are beginning to be frequent; caste is losing its fascinating power; Polytheism is giving way to Monotheism, and Christian ideas are rapidly spreading. Abundant proof of all this might easily be given. I will but cite the testimony of a competent witness, not likely to be biassed in favour of missions. The Calcutta correspondent of the *Times* recently wrote: "The middle and upper strata of Hindu society, under the direct propagandism of missions, and the moderate results of our rule, are seething with new ideas, desires, and beliefs, and presents a study full of significance to the philanthropist and scientific observer."

9. And this work will bear looking into in its details. Read all you can, for instance, and examine carefully, the missionary history of Sierra Leone, of Madagascar, of the Society, the Sandwich, the Samoan Islands, of Burmah, of Tinnevely, of Travancore, of some of the Chinese missions, or of some in Turkey and Syria, and you will find records of self-denial, heroism, and success, such as justify the confidence and the exultation of those of us who love this work as we have never loved anything else, no, not even life itself.

10. There are no signs of the power and reality of true religion among Christians in England, which are not exhibited, again and again, among the converts from heathenism. It purifies and elevates their lives, and sustains and gladdens them when death draws near, even as it does among ourselves, with those who come strongly beneath its influence. Facts illustrative of this—and thousands could be given—are the best reply to those who discountenance missionary work.

11. There are, to summarise all results, 2,000 European and American missionaries now labouring for the conversion of the heathen. They are assisted by about 700 ordained native preachers, and 15,000 who are unordained. These have now under their charge 2,600 churches, in which are 350,000 communicants, whilst around them have been gathered more

than 1,200,000 baptized adherents, and at least 200,000 scholars. They have rooted Christianity in 4,000 places, whence light and love and truth are emanating to pierce the thick darkness around. And among American and African tribes; and in many islands of the sea; and in kingdoms like Siam and Egypt; and in empires like Turkey, Persia, Burmah, China, and India, is there a moral and spiritual work of reconstruction, enlightenment, and reformation, precisely akin to the struggling processes of nature when winter is giving place to spring.

“From day to day, before our eyes,
(Grows and extends the work begun.
When shall the new creation rise
On every land beneath the sun?”

“When, in the Sabbath of His love,
Shall God amidst His labours rest;
And, bending from His throne above,
Again pronounce His creatures blest?”

Think of the limits within which Protestantism was confined eighty years ago, and then of the many races and tribes in which it has since gained a firm footing, and you will be astonished at the change. The glowing and beautiful language of prophecy is at least beginning to be fulfilled. The wilderness is turned into a fruitful field; the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose. The earth begins in all her regions to give her praise and homage to God. The Church has arisen, and is now putting on her beautiful garments, and the Gentiles are hastening to lay their treasures of love, fealty, and service at her feet. The Son of David reigns over a wider empire, and more subjects worship Him in far more tongues than at any former period. The accessions of His sway, during the last fifty years, have been more numerous and varied than during any fifty years since He ascended up on high and gave gifts to men.

Thoughts for an Exhortation.

“BUSY HERE AND THERE.”

ABSORBED in inferior matters, the confession has fallen from many lips, “As Thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.” 1 Kings xx. 40.

The Holy Spirit, kind and gracious, powerful to change the inner man and impart a meetness for heaven, has gone. The day in which to secure the great end of life has gone. The

period of youth, when the heart, though depraved, is not yet hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and the conscience, though defiled, is not seared as with a hot iron, has gone. That sermon, adapted to my case, worthy of being remembered and reduced to practice, has gone. Those kind words, prompted by Christian affection, exerting for the time a softening effect, have gone. Those serious impressions, pungent convictions, often the precursors of hope, have gone.

Sad has been the acknowledgment from *many a disciple*, "As thy servant was busy here and there," engrossed with topics remote from present duty, losing sight of covenant engagements, "he was gone." That neighbour, acquaintance, unbelieving friend, for whose eternal welfare I ought to have made direct exertions, has passed for ever beyond my reach. That opportunity of benefiting such a family or neighbourhood, of prevailing on such a neglecter of the public ordinances to frequent the sanctuary, has glided away unimproved. That season of hopeful indication for Zion, betokening the dawn of a better day, has disappeared, and no mercy drops descended.

Nor has this confession been a stranger to *the Christian parent*. "As Thy servant was busy here and there," not duly mindful of the home vineyard, the work there required, my child has gone, perhaps, to the grave and to the world of retribution, no more to hear the teachings of maternal affection, nor those lessons which a father's position and experience qualify him to give. Or if living, he has gone from the atmosphere, the example, the influence of home. Not as I might and should, have I taken advantage of that forming season when the heart is most susceptible, and the voice of God is heard, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." My child has gone, passed through the different stages of early life—gone not fortified to meet the temptations of an ensnaring world. Owing to my neglect, he may become a victim of vice, a wretched wanderer in some of the avenues of crime.

And so the child, favoured with a pious parentage, taught betimes by *a devoted mother* to rest his hope on the blessed Saviour. Wrung with anguish, not a few have confessed, "As Thy servant was busy here and there," little appreciating a mother's advice, with the pencil of the imagination drawing delusive pictures of the future, sketchings scenes and paths of earthly bliss, she has gone. Her lovely form has receded from my view. Those lips, accustomed with all gentleness to give line upon line, and precept upon precept, will do so no more. Henceforth, near the throne they will be occupied in praising redeeming love.

Many a Sabbath School teacher, entrusted with a bright, active

class, has been obliged to exclaim, "As Thy servant was busy here and there," explaining the truths of the Bible from Sabbath to Sabbath, conversing of Christ and religion, anticipating many similar opportunities, not dreaming about the arrows of disease, the coming of the pale, silent messenger, he or she, a promising lad, an amiable girl, was gone. Their seat is vacant. Whether faithful or unfaithful, my work for that scholar's good is ended.

Many a *young man*, having left the beaten track, the great highway of truth, for one of the by-paths of error, has said when too late, "As Thy servant was busy here and there," now devouring the contents of this infidel book, pamphlet, newspaper; now hearing this sceptical lecturer or preacher; now mingling in circles which calumniate the Gospel, its ministers, and disciples; thus "busy here and there," the principles of truth, early and faithfully inculcated, are gone; gone from my bosom is that hallowed influence which leads the soul earnestly to inquire and seek after salvation.

Surprised by their last sickness, without adequate preparation, many a wasted, emaciated one, hardly able to speak, is saying at this moment, "As Thy servant was busy here and there," intent on pleasure, honour, wealth, life with its opportunities has vanished, probation with its means and influences has terminated. "The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and I am not saved."

"The night cometh, in which no man can work." Work while it is called to-day.

Pulpit Illustrations.

THE DOOR OF HOPE CLOSED.

"And the door was shut."—*MATT. xxv. 10.*

IT will be a most fearful thing to him who finds at last the door of hope and of heaven closed and barred against him for ever. Let the impenitent reader of this seriously revolve in his mind this dreadful thought, and imagine the possibility of the tremendous result in his own case, till his heart deeply feels the force of the momentous truth.

Few men have had deeper experience than Bunyan, or have been able to present these affecting truths more vividly or impressively before the mind. In his work on the unspeakable

loss of the soul, Bunyan writes the following solemn dialogue between God and the lost sinner. After recounting the conduct of the sinner and his treatment of the great offers of salvation, Bunyan says:—"Of all these things God takes notice, writes them down, and seals them up for the time to come, and will bring them out, and spread them before them, saying, I have called, and you have refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; I have exercised patience, and gentleness, and long-suffering towards you, and in all that time you despised Me, and cast Me behind your back; and now the time, and the exercise of My patience, when I waited for you, and suffered your manners, and did bear your contempt and scorn, is at an end; wherefore I will now arise, and come forth to the judgment that I have appointed."

"But, Lord," saith the sinner, "we turn now."

"But, now," saith God, "turning is out of season; the day of My patience is ended."

"But, Lord," says the sinner, "behold our cries."

"But you did not," says God, "behold nor regard My cries."

"But, Lord," saith the sinner, "let our beseeching find place in Thy compassions."

"But," saith God, "I also beseeched, and I was not heard."

"But, Lord," says the sinner, "our sins lie hard upon us."

"But I offered you pardon when time was," says God, "and then you did utterly reject it."

"But, Lord," says the sinner, "let us therefore have it now."

"But now the door is shut," saith God. "The way of salvation is closed for ever."

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

"There is one body."—Eph. iv. 4.

Now this Church is *one Church*. "There is one body," writes St. Paul to the Ephesians (chap. iv. 4). A body with many heads would be a monstrosity; and a head with many bodies would be equally a monstrosity. The Church has *one Head*, even Christ; and Christ has *one body*, the Church. But the oneness of the Church does not lie in uniformity. Far from it. An eminent living divine says: "There is a world-wide liturgy going on. The worshippers are diverse in clime, and colour, and character, and language. Their modes of conducting the worship are diverse; there are written prayers and extempore prayers. There are old psalms copied from the Hebrew Bible, and new hymns breathed from the Christian heart. There are Episcopalian transepts in the temple, and Presbyterian pews, and Congregationalist, and Methodist, and Baptist, and Moravian, and

I know not how many other benches. To the narrow eye of an earthly spectator the scene is confused. To the narrow ear of an earthly auditor the sounds are discordant. But to the eye of our great Interpreter in heaven, our great heart-searching Priest, our great Liturgiser before the throne, the scene is one; not by mingling them all together, so as to lose the distinctiveness of each; but in all their diversities, one—a place for each and a use for each. Everyone is feeling, “I am a sinner,” and saying it as best he can. Everyone is feeling, “Christ is a Saviour;” and when the mutterings of all reach heaven, their united sound is, “Worthy the Lamb.”—*A. C. Price.*

THE GLORY OF HOLINESS.

THEY who willingly devote themselves unto Christ, to be soldiers and sacrifices unto Him, are not only armed with strength, but adorned with such inward graces, as make them beautiful as Tirza, comely as Jerusalem, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.—*Bishop Reynolds.*

UNDECIDED DESIRES.

WHEN I see a vapour ascend out of the earth into the air, why should I not think that it will never leave rising, till it get up to heaven? And yet because the motion is not natural, but caused either by expulsion from a heat within, or by attraction from a heat without, when the cause of that ascent is abated, and the matter gathers together into a thicker consistence, it grows heavy, and falls down again. Even such is the affection of those faint and unresolved desires of men, who, like Agrippa, are but half-persuaded to believe in Christ.—*Ibid.*

THE DEATH OF A KING.

ON the 6th July the King's (Edward VI.) spirits and body were so sunk, that he found death approaching, and therefore composed himself to die in a most devout manner. His whole exercise was prayer and ejaculations; the last he was heard to use was in these words: “Lord, deliver me out of this miserable and wretched life, and take me among Thy chosen; howbeit, not my will, but Thine be done. Lord, I commit my spirit unto Thee. O Lord, Thou knowest how happy it were for me to be with Thee; yet for Thy chosen's sake send me life and health, that I may truly serve Thee. O Lord my God, bless my people and save Thine inheritance. O Lord God, save Thy chosen people of England. O Lord God, defend this realm from Popery, and maintain Thy true religion, that I and my people may praise Thy holy name, for Jesus Christ's sake.” *Seeing*

some about him, he seemed troubled that they were so near, and had heard him; but with a pleasant countenance said he had been praying to God; and soon after, the pangs of death coming upon him, he said to Sir Henry Sidney, who was holding him in his arms, "I am faint; Lord, have mercy on me and receive my spirit;" and so he breathed out his soul. He died on the 6th day of July, 1553, in the sixteenth year of his age, when he had reigned six years, five months, and nine days."

TRUE RICHES.

"All things are yours."—1 Cor. iii. 21.

THE following lines were occasioned by the circumstance of a person going lately into the house of a poor pious man, with a large family, and saying to him, "My friend, you seem to be very poor." To which the man replied, "How can you call me poor, when through the grace of Christ all things are mine?"

How canst thou call me poor? All things are mine:
Whate'er I ask, my God replies, "'Tis thine;
The world, life, death, things present, things to come;"
Such is my store in Christ; a countless sum!

The world may think me poor; so I think them:
Their treasures I, my riches they contemn.
They have their good things now; for mine I wait:
How worthless theirs at best; the least of mine how great!

DOING RIGHT BEST.

"All things work together for good," &c.—Rom. viii. 28.

WHEN the Rev. James Solway was the curate of West Fielding, he had but £40 a year to provide for himself, wife, and seven children. Walking one day across a field, much distressed on account of the hardships his family endured, he found a purse of gold lying on the footpath. He looked around to find an owner; but there was none. So, taking it home, his wife advised him to employ, at least, a part of it, in extricating them from their present difficulty; but he conscientiously refused, until he had used his utmost endeavours to find out its former proprietor; assuring her that honesty is always the best policy. After a short time, it was owned by a gentleman who lived at some little distance, to whom the clergyman returned it, receiving no other reward than thanks. On the good man's return, his wife could not help reproving the gentleman with ingratitude, and censuring the over-scrupulous honesty of her husband; but he only replied, as before, honesty is the best policy. A few months after this, the curate received an invitation to dine with the aforesaid gentleman; who, after hospitably

entertaining him, gave him the presentation to a living of £300 per annum, to which he added a bill of £50 for his present necessities. The curate, after making suitable acknowledgments to his benefactor, returned with joy to his wife and family, acquainting them with the happy change in his circumstances; and adding, that he hoped she would now be convinced that honesty was the best policy; to which she readily assented.

THE SKYLARK PREACHER.

THERE was once in England a poor old woman, who, finding it hard work to get her living at home, thought she would like to go to the gold diggings in Australia. So she crossed the sea to that far-off country. The only treasures she possessed she took with her; one was her Bible, for she was a good old woman, and loved her Bible; the other was a pet skylark, which had been used to live in a small wicker-cage outside her cottage-window. When she got to Australia, she hired a little hut, and got her living by washing the gold-diggers clothes, and cooking their dinners. All the time the little lark sang his happy English song beside her door. She listened, and it cheered her at her work. Some of the gold-diggers listened, too—it was years since they had heard that familiar song—and many offered to buy the lark if the widow would only sell him. She shook her head: “No, no! I’ll never do that; but you may come o’ Sundays and hear him sing, mayhap it will do you good.” Alas! they had no church there—nothing to make Sundays different from other days. But, Sunday after Sunday, they did come; and the lark’s song told them of the green valleys in England; it brought back memories of their childhood—of the prayer learned at their mother’s knee—of the thoughts they once had about God and about heaven. Alas! how sadly forgotten now! The rough men’s hearts were softened; I think—nay, I am quite sure, they were better men for it. The skylark preached a little sermon to them: he did not know it—he did not mean it; but God meant it.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

THE meanest pin in nature’s frame
Marks out some letters of His name;
Where sense can reach or fancy rave,
From hill to hill, from grave to grave,
Across the waves, around the sky,
There’s not a spot, or deep or high,
Where the Creator has not trod,
And left the footsteps of a God.



THE LAY PREACHER.

Students of Scripture.



HERE are two classes of Scripture students of whom we wish to speak a few words in this article.

The first is that class who seldom read and study the Scriptures without previously-formed views of certain doctrines and principles, acquired from systems of divinity, or from some other human authority heard or read by them. With these views they read the Bible and interpret its revelations. They set themselves, "often unconsciously," as Archbishop Whately observes, "to ascertain, not what is the information or instruction to be derived from a certain narration or discourse of one of the sacred writers, but what aid can be derived from them towards establishing or refuting this or that point of dogmatic theology. Such a mode of study surely ought at least not to be exclusively pursued. At any rate, it cannot properly be called a *study of Scripture*."

Great evils have arisen from this mode of using the Bible. Detached portions of God's Word have been appropriated to the support of the most obnoxious tenets of men. God is said to have revealed what He never has revealed. The language of inspiration is quoted in proof of what is not good, wise, or useful. Whereas a Scriptural examination of Scripture—reading, searching, comparing,

in the spirit of prayer and humble reliance upon God—would have secured to them such views of truth as would have shown those peculiar notions which they had imbibed to have been unsound and erroneous.

The danger connected with this method of reading or studying the Scriptures is forcibly stated by the writer above quoted:—"So strong an association is apt to be established in the mind between certain expressions and the *technical* sense to which they have been confined in some theological system, that when the student meets with them in Scripture he at once understands them in that sense in the passages where, perhaps, an unbiassed examination of the context would plainly show that such was not the author's meaning. And such a student one may often find expressing the most unfeigned wonder at the blindness of those who cannot find in Scripture such and such doctrines, which appear to him to be as clearly set forth there as words can express; which, perhaps, they are, on the (often gratuitous) *supposition* that those words are everywhere to be understood exactly in the sense which he has previously derived from some human system—a system through which, as through a discoloured medium, he views Scripture. But this is not to take Scripture for one's guide, but rather to make one's self a *guide* to Scripture."

The second class of whom we would make mention are those persons who, perhaps, read little else than the Scriptures, and read them it may be frequently, but who exercise little or any thought upon what they read, who depend for enlightenment upon the bare perusal of the letter, while their minds continue in an entirely passive state. They go from book to book, from chapter to chapter, it may be, in regular rotation, as a horse in a mill, without having gained any more knowledge than the superficial reading has given them. And we have met with some who have acted from principle in this way, believing that they would gain more light in this method than they would by the exercise of their minds or reason while reading.

This certainly is as much a mistake as the mode we have just named. God has not given us the Bible to take the place of our reason, but to guide it in its exercises.

He has not so constructed the Bible as to render reflection on our part unnecessary, any more than He has made the earth in a way to render its cultivation unnecessary. He who best tills the soil, gets most good out of it; while he who merely looks at it or walks over it, or as little as possible cultures it, reaps scanty fruit. So the reader of the Bible who most meditates upon it, and uses the best means he has for its study, will gather the largest harvest of divine thought and feeling from its pages; while he who only passes over the surface with an active eye and a sluggish mind, will gather only the letter which killeth, while the Spirit which giveth life will be far from him.

Nature and revelation are both given us by God for our benefit. They are both laid out before us for our study. There are certain things in each which by a casual glance we may see the meaning and use of; but if we would acquire a knowledge of either so as in any degree to be able to teach others, we must exercise our minds in thought; we must "meditate upon these things," and give ourselves to understand them, that we may be profitable to them who hear us.

"The telescope," as an able writer says, "brings within the sphere of our vision much that would be undiscernible by the naked eye; but we must not the less employ our eyes in making use of it; and we must watch and calculate the motions, and reason on the appearances of the heavenly bodies which are visible only through the telescope with the same care we employ in respect of those seen by the naked eye."

Thus the Bible brings to our view truths which otherwise would have been hid from our sight; but we have need to think upon them as much as upon those which, without the Bible, are revealed to us in other ways and on other subjects. The Scriptures "were designed, not to save us the trouble of inquiring and reflecting, but to enable us on some points to inquire and reflect to better purpose; not to supersede the use of our reason, but to supply its deficiencies."

Biblical and Theological Themes.

THE WITNESS OF OUR OWN SPIRIT.

IT is probable that the phrase which I have placed at the head of this lecture is immediately drawn from Rom. viii. 16, according to the interpretation which supposes that two witnesses are mentioned in that passage, the Spirit of God and "our spirit."

But other texts are also thought to warrant the use of that expression, or of some one equivalent to it. "Their conscience also bearing witness." Rom. ii. 15. "My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." Rom. ix. 1. "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience." It is true that in these passages *conscience* is the word used. But this word in such a connection is regarded as nearly or partly synonymous with the other expression, *our spirit*.

As the evidence, however, of which I am now to speak proceeds likewise from the Holy Spirit, and is grounded on what He works in the heart, it is sometimes, and that, too, as I think, with just discrimination and great accuracy, called the Holy Spirit's *indirect* evidence, to distinguish it from His *direct* testimony, to the fact of our acceptance with God. Its origin, nature, and use shall now engage our attention.

I. Consider its *origin*—how it deserves remark.

1. That this evidence arises from something which is *actually wrought within us*, and that it is thus plainly distinguishable from that direct evidence of which I have already spoken.

2. That it must therefore follow, not precede, that other evidence, or the Spirit's testimony to the fact of our acceptance.

3. And, accordingly, that it connects itself with our regeneration, and *presupposes* the new nature which in regeneration is communicated to us.

II. Examine its *nature*. It is a scheme of argument and inference inseparable from the change which we find in our own hearts. Certain marks are attributable in Scripture to the children of God; we find, on a careful self-examination, that these marks exist in us; and we therefore conclude that we are the children of God. Thus, for example:—

1. We learn from the Scriptures that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," &c. (Gal. v. 22, 23); and we perceive that the word used is "fruit," not "fruits," thus suggesting to us the one undivided effect of the Spirit's agency; we also perceive that in the enumeration which follows "love" is first and paramount, the mother-principle of all the rest.

2. But, on a diligent self-scrutiny, we discover that *we possess* love to God and to all others for His sake as arising from a sense of His love towards us; and that we possess a measure of all the other graces mentioned in the text above cited.

3. And therefore we *conclude* that we are "born of the Spirit," that we "live in the Spirit," that we have His "fruit," that we are children of God.

III. Trace its *use*.

1. To multiply the evidences of our Christian sonship, and thus to give us the most grateful and quiet satisfaction of our transition "from death unto life."

2. To assure us in the hour of opposition and of manifold temptation that we are not yielding to delusion.

3. To convince others of the reality of that change which we profess to have experienced.

4. To afford us comfort and encouragement in every part of our Christian course.

1. It is observable that St. John, who dwells so emphatically on our real change—on what is wrought in us—and who delights to expatiate on the spiritual life, makes particular mention of this evidence of our sonship. See his first epistle throughout.

2. It is further observable that every view which we take of the religion of the Gospel proves it to be a *religion of love*, and exhibits it in its own inimitable simplicity.—*Dr. Hannah.*

The Love of God to the World.

A CHRISTMAS SERMON, BY THE EDITOR.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—JOHN iii. 16.

MR. NOTT, an American missionary, on a certain occasion was reading this chapter of John's gospel to a gathering of Indians, and when he came to the verse of the text, one of them cried out, "Stop, sir, read that again; what news is that about God? We would like to hear it again." The missionary read it over the second time; when he cried out, "Please, sir, read it again." The good man was only too glad to dwell upon this glorious theme, and so he read it again.

What preacher has not preached from this text? What con-

gregation has not heard sermons repeatedly from it? But where is the preacher that will ever give it up? And where is the congregation that will ever grow weary in listening to its blessed truths? Should such a thing occur, it might at once be affirmed that they had removed out of the circle of beings who cared to know the way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

It is an old theme, my brethren; but like the sun-light, is always welcome to them who are in felt darkness, and also to them who already enjoy its glorious and delightful manifestations.

This text furnishes us with four leading thoughts—a Lover, the Loved, the Love-Token, and the Love-Design.

I. We have a **LOVER** specified—"God."

Man is a being that *will have* a lover. If he cannot find one among his superiors or equals, he will seek one among his subordinates. Rather than be without, he will descend even to the domestic animals, and be glad to know that his dog or his cat loves him. But, my brethren, why should man be satisfied with the love of the brute, or his own species, or even the heavenly angels, when he may rise to God and recognise Him as his Lover?

God is man's Lover. Think of this, my brother, whoever thou art. Thou mayest be as poor as poverty can make thee; or as lonely as solitude can place thee; or as insignificant as thy superiors may consider thee, God is thy Lover. He smiles when others frown. He blesses when others curse. He takes up when others cast down. He is thy Lover, in whom is all might, wisdom, truth, grace, goodness, beauty, and perfection.

To Him should be given the precedence of all lovers in your estimation, before father, mother, sister, brother, friend. He was your Lover before any of these, and He loves in a degree and with a love infinitely beyond them.

If God is your Lover, are you His lover? Do you love Him because He first loved you? Do you dwell in Him by love? Do you commune with Him and obey Him in love?

II. **THE LOVED.** "God so loved the *world*."

This term "*world*" as it occurs in the Scriptures denotes sometimes the material creation, at other times the Jewish people, and then again the Gentile nations. But as used in the text it has a wider and deeper signification than anyone of these.

It means the world of *humanity*, as in 1 John ii. 2—"Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

As when we speak of the world in the sense of the material earth, we mean the earth that has been from the beginning, now is, and shall be in all time to come; so when the Saviour

speaks of the world here as referring to humanity, He includes the human family from the birth of it in Adam, through all its history, down to and comprehending all that now is, and all that shall be so long as men shall be dwellers on the earth.

And then, as when the term world is used in relation to earth we include all and every part of it—atoms and mountains—rivers and oceans—blades of grass and cedars of Lebanon—insects of a day and eagles of a hundred years : so, when the word is used by Jesus in this verse to signify humanity, it takes in all ages, classes, and conditions. It excludes none; for as each particular part is necessary to comprise the whole of the earth, so each particular man, woman, and child is necessary to comprise the world which is said to be the object of God's love.

Each human being, then, may consider himself loved of God, inasmuch as he is a part of the world. The Divine love falls on all, as the light of the sun; it embraces all, as the atmosphere; it excludes none, as the love of a gracious mother.

When we look at this world either in its parts or in the whole, it is an astonishing thing that God should love it. He did not love it for its moral beauty, for its deep affection towards Him and profound reverence of Him. The world did not know Him or care for Him; but on the contrary was in ignorance of Him and enmity towards Him; and yet He loved it.

This love of God to the world was a free, unmerited, unsought, undesired, universal love, which never has and never will have any parallel in heaven or earth.

There is no accounting for it but on the ground of the Divine nature itself. A minister was once speaking to an aged negress about the great wonder that God should love such a wicked world; when she exclaimed, "No wonder at all, massa; it be just like Him." Here is the philosophy of the whole matter. It is His nature to do it.

In the love of God to the world we see the foundation of those strange teachings of Jesus and of His apostles: "Love ye your enemies. Do good to them that hate you," &c. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink."

Not until a man has reached the experience and practice of loving his enemies, even the bitterest and lowest, has he risen to a life in the neighbourhood of God. It is easy enough to live down in the plain of the world, loving them that love us, doing good to them that do good to us; but the life after God is infinitely higher, that of loving them who hate us and spitefully use us.

To respect and love our equals or superiors in wisdom, goodness, influence, riches, associations, and residence, is no difficult

matter; but to love the poor, the maimed, the ignorant, the ragged, the outcast, the filthy, between whom and ourselves there is such a wide chasm, and to make ample provision of every kind for them in our own dwelling, and at our own expense, is a thing rarely if ever seen. But this is what God does. This is the love of God to our world.

God's love to the world. This is the glory of the Gospel. Set it forth, ye messengers of Jesus. Everywhere proclaim this Divine truth. Go into *all the world*, and preach to *every creature* that God has loved him.

III. THE LOVE-TOKEN. "God so loved the world, that *He gave His only begotten Son*."

We have all received love-tokens from someone or other who loved us; and we have all given love-tokens to someone or other whom we loved. But how rare the tokens of love which we have given to our *enemies*! And where are the love-tokens that any of us possess, given by them who regarded us as their enemies? But while we were yet enemies to God He loved us, and as a token of His love gave His only begotten Son.

His only begotten Son. It had been a great thing for Him to have given an angel; but He gave the Lord of the angels: Him who was His Fellow; His Express Image; His Equal; by Whom He made the worlds; the Brightness of His glory; than Whom there was no equal or superior in all the created intelligences of the universe; in Whom was His delight, and Who was with Him as brought up with Him from all eternity.

He gave Him. He was a free gift, an unspeakable gift, a Divinely-infinite gift, an unprecedented and unparalleled gift. He gave Him to the world, to come into it, to live in its midst, that He might do as He would, and that the world might do with Him as it listed. And the Gospel narratives tell us in plain words how He lived, and how the world dealt with Him.

He gave His only begotten Son to be the world's Teacher, the world's Benefactor, the world's Example of purity, the world's Ruler in righteousness, the world's Ransom from the power of sin and hell, the world's Intercessor with Himself in heaven, the world's Converter, Sanctifier, and Guide to immortality in the Person of His Spirit.

In speaking of the only begotten Son of God as God's Love-token to the world, you must not suppose that God had not loved the world before this, or given to it any other love-tokens. God loved the world from the beginning, and had shown it in ten thousand ways. All His dealings with the world through the shining sun, moon, and stars; through the falling dew and rain; through the changing wind and air; through the growing fruits and crops; through the nourishing, abundant good things of

wilderness, fields, and seas; through His manifestations to patriarchs, prophets, and priests; through the giving of laws, precepts, and promises, by inspiration. In all these ways God had shown His love to the world. But these were only as the drops before the shower, or as the twilight before sunrise, or as the intimation before the infinite fact was declared. The love-token given in Jesus is so great, so magnificent, so stupendously superseding everything else that God had done, that St. John speaks of it as though it was the only expression of His love which He had given: "Herein is love,"—as though there had been no love in anything before—"not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The apostle does not mean to intimate that God did not love the world before, but that this was such an outcome of His love, that all previous ones are absorbed or lost in its dimensions; as when the bridegroom receives the bride for his wife in wedlock, all previous love-tokens are lost sight of in her; as when the sun-light is on the earth, the light of the moon and stars is no longer seen.

"God *so* loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." The meaning of this word "*so*" must be looked for in the gift. Do you ask, How much did God love the world? We answer, He *so* loved it, that He gave His only begotten Son. If you can measure the Son's Divinity, glory, wisdom, sufferings, atonement, mediatorial government of saving and sanctifying grace, you may attain some adequate conception of the love wherewith God loved the world. But as this is impossible, we must be content to let the full significancy of that small word remain undefined and incomprehensible.

As a member in the great family of the world's humanity, everyone has a token of the Father's love to him. My brother, does your sceptical heart, or your sceptical neighbour ask you to show him your token of love from God? Do not point him to the heavens with their innumerable worlds, or to the earth with its endless good things, or to the law with its holiness and demands, or to the prophets and priests of the Jewish religion, or to the beneficence and wisdom of Providence, or to the mystery and grandeur of your own existence as a human being. But take him to Jesus. Disclose to him, as you are best able to do, the glories, wonders, and blessings of His life, death, resurrection, and heavenly mediation. And enraptured yourself with His excellencies and filled with His love, and lost in adoring gratitude, declare with a trumpet-voice, "Herein is the sign, the evidence, the token of the love of God to me; and were there no other in the universe, this is enough to demand my strength, my soul, my all."

IV. THE LOVE-DESIGN. "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The design of God in giving this love-token to the world was not fanciful or sentimental. It was not that the world might only admire it or theorise upon it, or lift it up as an object of wonder and astonishment. No. The design was the most philanthropic and disinterested. It was to avert the *greatest evil* from the world and to bring upon it the *greatest good*—that man should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Through sin the world is on the way to perishing, physically, mentally, spiritually. This is the end to which sin leads its votaries. Disorganisation of parts, unbalancing of powers, confusion of the whole, impoverishment, ruin; an utter perversion of every high purpose of man's creation, is the terrible end of every one who lives and dies in sin.

This is the culmination of evil in the universe to man. There is nothing more fearful that can enter into the most vivid imagination. There is no evil that a man in his senses so much dreads. To perish with hunger, or with cold, or in shipwreck, bodily; or to perish mentally, by a breaking up of the balance of the intellect so that an asylum must be the home of its subject; or to perish morally, so that there is a total abandonment to corruption by an absolute revolt from all powers of moral restraints. To perish in these senses in this world is, we say, to every man in his right mind, an evil the magnitude of which he would give everything he has to avoid did he see it coming upon him.

But that perishing to which the text more particularly refers implies inconceivably more than can be put into it as limited to this earthly existence.

God, then, by the gift of His Son, designs to turn aside and prevent the world coming into this most terrible of all calamities.

This in itself is an invaluable blessing; but the design contemplates more than the aversion of the greatest evil. It means to bestow in its place the greatest positive good, "everlasting life." As perishing is that of which man has such fear, so is life that of which he has the profoundest love. That he shrinks from, this he follows after, that he would escape at the sacrifice of all, and this he would purchase at the price of all. "All that a man hath will he give for his life."

Life, then, is that which the love of God designs to give to the world by the gift of His Son. Life in its purest, highest, noblest organisation, harmony, activities, relations, hopes, joys, victories, and rewards. Life in God, in Christ, in the truth, in far higher glory and happiness than unfallen man enjoyed, in

uncorrupted Paradise. This life, running in and through man, blessing him in body, soul, and spirit. This life, perpetuated for ever and ever—"everlasting life."

But how has the Father's love arranged for this design to be accomplished? "That whosoever *believeth* in Him." Love has not only designed a good, but the wisdom of love has opened a way by which the good can be obtained. "*Believeth* in Him." This is the way. Here is Jesus as the bread of heaven; there is man perishing for hunger; *believing* in Him is the taking and eating by which perishing is averted and life is secured. Here is Jesus, the fountain of living waters; there is man, perishing of thirst; *believing* is the conduit pipe which attached to Him conveys the pure stream into the soul dying of thirst, by which it lives for ever. Here is Jesus, the Rock of Ages; there is man, perishing in the black sea of his sins; *believing* is taking hold of and climbing on the Rock, by which he is saved from perishing and preserved in life. Here is the Great Healer of diseases, the great feast Provider, the Good Samaritan; there is humanity, blind, deaf, dumb, palsied, wounded, famishing, fallen among thieves, and abandoned by all human sympathies and compassions; *believing* is the touching, the speaking, the coming, the looking, by which His virtues are received and perfect life is restored.

Believeth in Him. It is not to him that worketh, then, but to him that believeth, life is given. A man may work with his intellect in thinking of Christ as profoundly and correctly as an angel, but that will not gain him life. A man may work with his moral faculties as rigidly and comprehensively as did Saul of Tarsus, but that will not gain him life. A man may work as beneficently and miraculously as those who said, "Lord Lord, open unto us," but that will not gain him life. It is believing on the Son that brings life to the soul. He that believeth hath life.

You need not make this believing in Jesus a mystery. It is no more a mystery than believing in a man, whom you have never seen, but of whom you have heard much; than believing in the good properties of a medicine which you have never tried, but of which you have heard or read abundance of testimonies.

"But I would believe if I felt." That would not be faith, brother. It would be feeling or experience.

It is only by believing in food and eating it that you can feel its life-sustaining effects. It is only by believing in medicine and taking it that you can feel its healing and restoring benefits. It is only by believing in a friend that you can repose in his friendship, receive his counsel, and act upon his

teachings. So it is only by believing in the Son of God, that you can feel you are saved from perishing and have everlasting life.

Believeth in Him. You may believe in God as a Deist, and perish. You may believe in Moses, in the law and in tradition, as a Jew, and perish. You may believe in the Virgin Mary, saints, and images, as the Romanist, and perish. You may believe in the church, the prayer-book, the Bible, the eucharist, baptism, and ceremonies, as the Ritualist, and perish. You may believe in every existing person and thing, in all the past and in all the present; but if you do not believe in Jesus, you perish. It is in Him, and in Him only that there is life. This life—everlasting life—is in His Son. It is He only Whom God has set forth as your propitiation. It is He only Whom God has given to be the life of the world. He only is the “Way, the Truth, and the Life, *and no man cometh unto the Father but by Him.*”

But how far does this design extend in relation to the world? “That *whosoever* believeth in Him.” The Divine love knows nothing of partiality and discrimination here. It embraces all, as the atmosphere the earth. It comes to the world as the sun of the morning, and says, Whosoever opens his eyes shall see by my light. It comes as the gurgling spring flowing from the mountain rock, and says, Whosoever shall drink of me shall quench his thirst. It comes as the fruits of the earth, and says, Whosoever shall eat of me shall have his hunger satisfied. Divine love says in the person of the Son, “Come unto Me *ALL* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;” and “Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.” It says further, “*Everyone* that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” It says yet further, “*Whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely.”

Yes, brethren, this love of God is all-comprehensive. Shall His providence in nature provide for everyone that has breath and His love in Jesus not provide for everyone that has a soul? Shall His sun in the heavens without partiality fall in its rays upon palace and cottage, upon babe and parent, upon pauper and prince, upon a mole-hill and a mountain, upon an islet and a continent, and His love in Jesus be less diffusive, less universal? God forbid.

The language of man may restrict, may discriminate, may elect, but the language of the Divine Father's love is, “*Whosoever* believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Go, then, ye disciples of Jesus, to *all*, wherever you meet them,

and whoever they are, and preach the undistinguishing love of God. Irrespective of any difference in body, mind, soul, circumstance, position, or age, declare as with the voice of the Master, God has loved them, and whosoever of them will believe in Jesus shall have everlasting life.

O delightful message! Surely this is Gospel without an equal. The feast is provided, and *whosoever* will, even from the highways and hedges, may come and be guests! The Physician is come, and *whosoever* will of the world's diseased ones, may be healed by His remedy."

"None need perish,
All may live, for Christ has died."

"Oh, believe the record true,
God to you His Son hath given!
Ye may now be happy too;
Find on earth the life of heaven:
Live the life of heaven above,
All the life of glorious love.

"This the universal bliss,
Bliss for every soul design'd;
God's original promise this,
God's great gift to all mankind;
Blest in Christ this moment be!
Blest to all eternity."

This subject teaches us:—

1. *God's strong attachment to the world.* Although it had revolted from Him, and set up itself in rebellion against Him, and gone off as far as it could from Him, He would not give it up to its own ways, and leave it to wander in eternal desolation and death. He might have done so in all righteousness. He had ten thousand other worlds to revolve in perfect allegiance around His throne, and to show His glory in undeviating obedience and love. But this was not enough. He was not only attached to them, but to the one which was lost. He yearned over it. He felt a mother's compassion towards it. How could He give it up? Was it not His own creation? Was He not its Father? What would the faithful worlds think of His paternal pity and love, did He not care for the one which had gone astray?

2. *It teaches us God's earnest wish to save the world.* His was not a love without an act to show it; a compassion without a deed to prove its existence. He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. He sent after the lost one to find him. He paid down a ransom price to redeem the captive. He spread bounties before the famishing ones to feed them. The gracious dealings of God for two thousand years failing to

recover the estranged world, He sent His only begotten Son. Oh, how earnest must God have been to do this! His heart was set upon it, and to accomplish it He poured out His heart, into human nature, life, and suffering.

Let all Christians be also divinely in earnest to save the world.

3. It teaches us *the blessing which God considers as the greatest for man's possession and enjoyment*—"everlasting life." God only knows the value of this. He weighs its importance in Himself and in His rational creatures. Life to God is of greater consequence than all the material universe. This might perish, but that shall endure; but if that perished this must perish also. Thus He regards life to man. And so we find that God sent His only begotten Son that man might have everlasting life. The Son's coming into the world has made no provision for the cessation of earthquakes, of storms, of sickness, of death, of railway accidents, of poverty, and other material evils associated with material things of man's connection. No! It looks higher than these and respects the things which comprise life—everlasting life, which to man is of infinite more concern and value than the possession of all the earth, and the control of all its laws and destinies. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

We, too, should learn from God to set a just estimate upon the life which shall never end. Who of us can reckon the worth of that life which could only be made attainable by the sacrifice of God's only begotten Son?

4. It teaches us *the simplicity of the way of salvation*. BELIEVING in Jesus. In this we see our Father's love and compassion. He knew the way which would best suit us in our circumstances; therefore that way He opened before us.

5. It teaches us that *if any perish to whom the Gospel is preached, God is free from any imputation of blame*. He loved all, He gave His Son for all, and He designed that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Evidently, then, God wills not the death of any one. His will is to save all, and he who is not saved is lost because of his own deliberate unbelief in relation to the Son of God. He perishes in his own blood, shed by his own hands. He dies in his own rags and filthiness, because he will not have the Gospel cleansing and clothing. Be it known, then, throughout the universe, that the man who perishes in time or eternity is SELF-destroyed. The voice of the Son rings in his ears for ever, "Ye would not come unto Me that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly." Amen.

A Watch-Night Meditation.

FAITHFUL IN LEAST.—LUKE xvi. 10.

BY WM. M. TAYLOR, D.D.

WHEN, at the close of the parable of the Prudent Steward, our Lord says, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much, and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much," He enunciates a principle which is far-reaching in its influence and universal in its application. In its immediate reference, indeed, it has to do with money, and it is part of an argument which may thus be summarised. There are two kinds of riches: those which are transient and those which are true; those which are another's, and those which are our own; those of external property, and those of internal character and happiness. Of these the material are the least, and the spiritual are the greatest. In this world we are entrusted with the material for the purpose of testing and developing the spiritual, and according as we deal with the lower we shall ourselves be dealt with in the higher. "If ye have been unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have been unfaithful in that which is another's, who shall give you that which is your own?" Thus here, as in all other cases, the principle holds good: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much, and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."

But, though thus restricted in its primary application, we may take this moral maxim and deduce from it some lessons which may be of signal service to us in our daily lives.

Thus it teaches us, for one thing, that *fidelity in little things is the surest test of character*. Morality is not a thing of magnitude, but of quality. Right is right and wrong is wrong as really in a small matter as in a great affair. We are so apt to judge from consequences, indeed, that we frequently account that the greatest sin from which the largest results appear to follow; while we make little or nothing of the evil which does not seem to us to be linked to important issues. But the character of actions has to be judged altogether apart from their consequences, and, when we weigh them thus beneath the exhausted receiver of God's law, from which the atmosphere of public opinion has been excluded, we see that evil in little things is just as really evil as it is in greater. So far, we imagine, all will agree with us; but some may be disposed to

falter when we go further, and affirm that character is more correctly indicated through little things than through great. Yet a little reflection will convince anyone that this is, indeed, the case. For a man sets himself up on great occasions, and in so far as he puts this strain upon himself he ceases to be truly himself. In little things there is no such constraint upon him, and his real self becomes apparent. You get the best likeness of a man when he is unconscious that you are taking it. Hence it is that so many photographic portraits are stiff, stately, unnatural, and altogether different from their originals. The "sitter" knew that his likeness was being taken, and he tried to look his best, thereby failing to be natural and just himself. Now, it is the same in moral things. It is when one is unconscious of making any effort that he is most thoroughly himself. If you want to know the character of a man, you will not ask what he is on state occasions and review days, when he is upon his guard; but you will follow him to his home, and mark what he is to his wife, or to his children, or to his valet. In the little details of domestic life he will unconsciously reveal himself; and this revelation, just because of its unconsciousness, is infallibly correct. Perigeaux showed his shrewdness when he read the careful character of Lafitte through such a tiny thing as his stooping to pick up a pin from the garden walk; and those old Covenanters were wise in their generation who detected a spy in their cave from the fact that he did not ask a blessing on the food which their kindness set before him. Now, it is thus we are revealing our characters every day, not only to our fellow-men, but to the eye of the all-searching God; and, in the light of this solemn consideration, who among us is not disposed to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Not by what we do and say on the special occasions of the Sabbath and the Lord's Supper is Jehovah testing us. He is reading us as we reveal ourselves in the minute details of our daily business and domestic life; and by such things as the giving or the refusing of "a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of a disciple" we shall find that we shall be judged at last. To no purpose shall we say that we were unconscious of what we were doing. For this very unconsciousness it was that let our real character display itself. What a thought this is; and as we ponder over it, does not the prayer press for utterance to our lips: "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified?"

But another lesson which we may learn from the Saviour's words is that *fidelity in little things is the best preservative of character*. No man ever became heinously wicked all at once. The revelation of character may be sudden, but its growth is

gradual; and when the world is startled by the intelligence of some dreadful crime, it will usually be found that the person who has been guilty of it has been for long years descending step by step to the depth of infamy which he has reached. Two different lines of rails issuing from the same station may run very near to each other at the first; but at length the divergence may be so great that half a continent may lie between their termini. So the paths of right and wrong may seem to be at the outset almost parallel; but at last the end of the one is at the throne of God, and that of the other in the place of woe. Yet the distance is passed over in *single steps*, each of which seems only a little thing to him who is taking the fatal journey. At the outset, with much shrinking of heart and upbraiding of conscience, one small evil is committed; but, this step taken, the foot is already lifted for a second, which seems no greater than that which went before; and so, by degrees, the sinner presses forward in his career of wickedness. Hence there is no security save in withstanding beginnings. "Take care of the little sins," says an old Puritan; "for they are like little thieves, which, being let into the house through the window, open the door to bigger ones." "Take care of the cents," says the business proverb, "and the dollars will take care of themselves." So we may say: "Take care of the little duties, and the big ones will take care of themselves." Keep away from little sins, and you will not fall before the greater. Especially be on your guard against depreciating the importance of conscientiousness in small affairs; for by the commission of minor evils the enamel of the conscience is broken, and its sensitiveness may be ultimately destroyed. What a difference there is between Lot as you see him there offering sacrifice to God with Abraham at the altar of Bethel, and as he was on that day, when, hurried by the angel's hand from the burning Sodom, he was saved from its destruction, "yet so as by fire." Would you know how all this has come about? I think I see an indication of that which caused it all in a question uttered by Lot even in the hour of his deliverance. He said to the angel in regard to Zoar: "Is it not a little one?" Depend upon it that was not the first occasion on which Lot used these words. It had become a habit with him to employ them. When his servants quarrelled with Abraham, and he had to choose a separate encampment for himself, he looked over the plain of Jordan, and saw that it was well-watered and good for flocks. "But Sodom is in it," whispers conscience. "Isn't that a little thing?" replies Lot. "I need not go into the city unless I please." So "he pitched his tent toward Sodom." Once there, it was another "little thing" to go into the city; and, when he became a resident

within its walls, it was another "little thing" to allow his children to intermarry with its citizens. And this is the end of it, as deprived of his flocks and herds, bereaved of his wife and all his children save his two daughters, he is hastened forward to a deliverance which he owed not to his own desert, but to Abraham's intercession. Is there nothing in all this to arouse us to the importance of fidelity in little things, and to evoke from us the prayer of David: "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent of the great transgression."

But, to mention one lesson more, the words of the Saviour may teach us that *fidelity in little things is the best preparative of character for rising to a higher sphere*. This is well understood by men in their business affairs. When a merchant has a vacancy in his establishment, he promotes to it that one of his servants who in the post which he has been occupying has displayed the greatest measure of fidelity and perseverance; and, when a youth applies for a situation, the success of his application will depend on the report which his former employer gives regarding him, or on the record which he has written for himself in school. But it is not otherwise in the Providence of God. Those who fill best the spheres in which they have been placed are, in general, those who are in the long run advanced to higher positions; while they who despise the small things of their present duties are left to sink into still deeper obscurity. This is not, indeed, invariably the case in this life, for there are anomalies in the present dispensation which are to us inscrutable; but all these shall disappear hereafter, and those who have been most faithful in the least things of the present life shall have the loftiest spheres of service in the life that is to come. I do not say, indeed, that this position shall come to them because of any merit in their fidelity, for it is of the grace of God through Jesus Christ that any reward will be given to any man; but, this being conceded, the parable of the talents seems to me to teach that the principle on which rewards will be distributed will be that each shall receive according to his works—that is, according to the degree of faithfulness which he has manifested in the discharge of duty here. We are thus each not only making ourselves for eternity, but also making the places which we are each to fill throughout its endless cycles. To some it may appear that there is nothing in the work we are daily doing which can fit us for the duties of the life beyond. But that is a mistake. The boy at school sees little in the drudgery of his lessons that has any connection with his after career, and

he comes to you and says: "Father, I am not going to be a minister, or a lawyer, or a doctor. I will never need this Latin in after life. Why must I continue to construe its hard sentences?" Or, again: "I am not going to be an engineer, and will not need mathematics in the work which I am going to do. Why must I plod through these weary demonstrations?" But you reply: "It may be very true that you will not need in after days to do any of these things that you are doing now; but you will need the mental qualities which only the doing of these things now will train and develop in you. So work away, and let me judge for you." Now, thus it is with the daily life of the believer on earth and that of the redeemed in the future. We shall not need in heaven to do precisely the same thing as we are doing here; but we shall need those qualities of holiness, courage, love, and faithfulness, which only the doing of the things which are now at our hands can, by the blessing of God's Spirit, form and strengthen within us. We have thus in the principle of the Saviour's words a lever by means of which we may raise our present lives up to the level of heaven itself. No matter how lowly may be our lot, or how humble may be the duties which we are called to discharge, we are, through our faithfulness, preparing ourselves for the work which we shall have to do above. We are here at school for heaven; and, though at times the lessons may be hard and the discipline severe, we shall, if we have been diligent and devoted to Christ, at the last *graduate* into glory, and receive the place which is not more surely prepared for us than we are fitted to it. Let us not, therefore, wait until we get into the greater before we begin to manifest our faithfulness. In that case there shall be no greater for us. But let us press forward to the higher through the earnest discharge of the duties of the lower. Thus, while our holy ambition is aiming after the higher, our Christian prudence will look to the lower, and recognise in it the foundation on which the higher rests. The "least" is important because of its bearing on the greatest." And he alone that humbleth himself to accept the lowly sphere and to perform with earnestness its duties, shall be exalted to the higher.

THE CARE OF GOD.—That God, surely, that hath a care of the mean animals, will not be careless of His affectionate worshippers. He that feeds the ravens will not starve His doves. He that satisfies the ravening wolf will not famish His gentle lambs and harmless sheep.—*Charnock*.

Materials for Sermons.

XXXVI.—WELL-DOING.

“Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”—GAL. vi. 9.

“**L**IKE produces like.” Wheat cannot produce barley, nor can barley produce wheat. It depends upon our actions as to what our future destiny shall be. It is the well-doing that meets with a well done. Then, “Let us not be weary in well-doing,” &c.

From these words let us notice—

I. THE ADMONITION RELATIVE TO THE SPIRITUAL WORK: “Let us not be weary,” &c.

1. *Let us not be weary in serving God.*

(1.) Let us serve Him with filial fear. We cannot serve God acceptably without reverence and godly fear. There must be no slavish fear, but filial fear—a fear of offending God. Psalm v. 7. Faith without fear is presumption; but let faith and fear be associated, and you will please God.

(2.) Let us serve God with pure love. 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Let nothing prompt to the performance of religious duties but love to God. Reverence, esteem, desire, and delight in Him as your chief good.

(3.) Let us serve God with an unshaken confidence. Heb. xi. 6. Prayer cannot avail with God except it be fervent prayer—the prayer of faith. Let your confidence be unshaken. Fear not. God will uphold you with the right hand of His righteousness.

2. *Let us not be weary in labouring to extend the kingdom of Christ.*

(1.) Let us labour with a pure heart. This is essential to our success in the work of God. Purity of heart prepares us for every duty. God has touched our hearts, and that touch prompts us to action. Hence the success of Barnabas. “He was a good man,” &c. Acts xi. 24.

(2.) Let us labour in the spirit of zeal and activity. We must be zealous and active. Rom. xii. 11. “Instant in season and out of season;” doing not only what is pleasing to

God, but doing it with our might. Eccles. ix. 10. "As we have therefore opportunity," &c. Verse 10.

(3.) Let us labour with a single eye to God's glory. We must labour to promote the glory of God. Isaiah xlviii. 11. How awfully did the Pharisees err in this particular! If we seek the glory of God, we are saved; but if our own, we are lost. Beware! Give the glory to God. 1 Cor. x. 31.

3. *The importance of continuing in well-doing.* Importance—

(1.) To ourselves. Luke ix. 62. We must press forward. If we would accomplish much for God, we must live on high; we shall need a strong arm and a firm hold on heaven. Let us, therefore, be in earnest. It is important—

(2.) To others. Matt. v. 16. Much depends upon the light we exhibit as to others embracing the religion of Christ. Our religion should ever be apparent to all. Let us, "as we have opportunity," feed Christ in the hungry, give Him drink in the thirsty, &c. Matt. xxv. 37-40. We may gladden many hearts and benefit many souls by our "cups of cold water," which "in no wise lose their reward." "Do good unto all men," &c. Notice—

4. *The possibility of becoming weary in well-doing.* There is a great honour in well-doing. In doing good, we are like Him who "went about doing good." We are to be good, and to do good. A man in business, to do well, must attend to his business. So it is in spiritual matters. Heb. x. 38, 39.

Let us observe—

II. THE REWARD THAT FOLLOWS WELL-DOING: "For in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

1. *The time stated:* "In due season." When the crop is fully ripe, when our work on earth is done, and our souls are fully ready for heaven. Rev. ii. 10. Death, then, is the period which is solemn and important to us. Luke xvi. 22. The soul enters a state of happiness immediately the body dies. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." Christ said to the dying, but penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

2. *The act mentioned:* "We shall reap." There can be no mistake—we shall receive the crown, the robe, the palm, and a mansion in our Father's house; for it is His "good pleasure to give us the kingdom." Every word is true. "We shall reap." "We" who are faithful unto death "shall"—according to—

Divine promise, "reap" all that is promised, "if we faint not." The reward is sure, the crop is certain." 2 Peter i. 11.

3. *The condition expressed*: "If we faint not." Unless the farmer ploughs and sows, he will look for the harvest in vain. We may pray for ever, but if we faint, we cannot reap. Then let us be active, and never faint; let us continue in well-doing. To this end God has blest us with all our powers—thought, memory, understanding, &c.; for this we were created, and are blest with food and raiment, with health and strength, that we may continue in doing good, glorify God, and find our way to heaven.

4. *The crop intimated*: "We shall reap," &c. Reap what? "He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Surely sowing to the Spirit means living a holy, heavenly, spiritual, and useful life—a life actuated by the purest motives. If we so live, we "shall reap life everlasting. What a crop! how glorious! how abundant! We shall reap not only in quality, but in quantity. The crop will be according to the seed sown. 2 Cor. ix. 6. We shall reap the fruits of an eternal harvest before the throne of God.

In conclusion—

1. Life is the seed-time for eternity. The short period given to prepare for heaven. Use it, use it well.

"Short is our longest day of life,
And soon its prospect ends;
Yet, on this day's uncertain state
Eternity depends.
Yet equal to our being's aim,
The space to mortals given;
And every moment, well improved,
Secures an age in heaven."

2. Are you sowing to the flesh or to the Spirit? If to the flesh, consider the crop; if to the Spirit, sow bountifully. Do not spare, live holily, be in earnest. "Work while it is day," &c.

J. B. HOBERRY.

Illustrations, &c.

SOWING AND REAPING.—One day the master of Lukman (an Eastern fabulist) said to him, "Go into such a field and sow barley." Lukman sowed oats instead. At the time of harvest his master went to the place, and seeing the green oats springing up, asked him, "Did I not tell you to sow barley here? Why,

then, have you sown oats?" He answered: "I sowed oats in the hope that barley would grow up." His master said, "What foolish idea is this? Have you ever heard of the like?" Lukman replied, "You yourself are constantly sowing in the field of the world the seeds of evil, and yet expect to reap in the resurrection day the fruits of virtue! Therefore I thought, also, I might get barley by sowing oats!" The master was abashed at the reply, and set Lukman free.

PREPARING OUR OWN HEAVEN.—There is a legend which we have read of St. Thomas, the apostle of the Indies. Gondofernes, the king of the Indies, gave him a vast sum of money to build him a palace; all of which, however, St. Thomas gave away in charity and for religion. Gondofernes, on his return from a long absence, was greatly enraged, and caused Thomas to be seized and cast into prison. Meanwhile the king's brother dies, but after four days comes back from the dead. He tells Godofernes that he had been in Paradise, and that St. Thomas had built him *there* a beautiful palace, which he had seen. The king rushed to the prison, and liberated Thomas with passionate expressions of gratitude and regret. The meaning is obvious. What we are sowing here is growing and ripening to the harvest yonder; and the consecration of this great treasure of our life, which God has given us, to His service and glory on earth, is the rearing up of a palace, unseen for the present, but destined to appear in all its grandeur when the scaffolding of time shall have been taken down, and we shall confront the perfected structure in the great eternity.

IN DUE SEASON.—Called, in the providence of God, in the summer season, for six successive summers, to be in a small village on the banks of the Hudson, I met weekly, Sabbath after Sabbath night, with a little company, never more than seven, met to pray for the salvation of souls. For seven long years there was but one addition to that church. The Gospel seemed to be faithfully preached. They were discouraged, despairing, giving up. I returned to the city in October. At the last prayer-meeting which I attended in the village there was one came whom I had not seen before: there were eight, I think, that evening. About a week afterwards the oldest elder in the church came down, and said he was going to sell his place and move away; he could not live in that

neighbourhood any longer; he thought he was no use there. Three weeks after, however, he came into my office at Wall-street, the tears rolling down his cheeks. I saw that something great was the matter with him. As soon as I was at leisure, he came to me and said, "Brother, would you believe it? the heavens are opened; the shower is descending; our prayers continued for seven long years are at last heard. The young girl who came into the prayer-meeting the last Sabbath you were with us is converted to God. She has gone out into the highways and hedges; she has brought in one and another. We have now eighteen under deep conviction of sin; and it was my privilege to stand up in our little congregation of about one hundred, and count over thirty souls hopefully converted to God."—*Rev. R. Wells.*

LABOURING ON.—The builder works on until his house is completed, then receives his pay. The mechanic is not weary of his work until he has finished his machine, then he rejoices over his handiwork and reaps his recompense. The farmer is not weary of ploughing until the field is ploughed, or of sowing until all is sowed, or of waiting until the harvest is ripe, then he reaps and gathers. The sea captain sails on in his course as winds, tides, and weather may permit, until he enters port and greets his friends, disposes of his cargo, and reaps his reward. Shall the Christian not be constant and faithful in the highest, purest, and greatest of works, until the Master shall say, "That is enough, well done, good and faithful servant," &c.

XXXVII.—THE IMPORTANCE OF REPENTANCE

"And the days of this ignorance God winked at," &c., &c.—*Acts xvii.* 30, 31.

THE text refers to three different periods in the world's history—past, present, and future. The past is denominated, "The times of ignorance," and undoubtedly refers to the period prior to Christ's incarnation, when "the people sat in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death." The present is denominated "now," and means the Gospel dispensation. The future is denominated "the appointed day," and points to the second advent of Christ. Each of these periods give us somewhat a different phase of God's character. In the first, His forbearance and longsuffering is manifested, overlooking the heathen

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THE END.

idolatry, without interposing to punish it; in the second, His unbounded love and the unsearchable riches of His grace are declared in the plan of our salvation; and in the third, His righteousness will be exhibited, "rendering to every man according to his works." A very close connection exists between these different periods; the past was a kind of preparation for the present, and the present is an opportunity to prepare for the future. Our subject is—

The importance of repentance. Its import is seen by considering two things.

I. IT IS ENJOINED BY THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY. "*God commandeth.*" The import of every commandment lies in the magnanimity of Him who enjoins it. God is the source of all authority. "For there is no power but of God." "The powers that be are ordained of God. The fact that God commandeth man to repent proves that it is—(1) possible, (2) urgent; (3) and demands submission.

1. The universality of the command—"All men."

2. Its extensiveness—"Everywhere."

II. IT IS SUPPORTED WITH THE STRONGEST ARGUMENT. Two are mentioned in our text.

1. The dispensation we live under—"But *now* commandeth." The duty of repentance was always binding, but *now* is peremptory. Why? (1.) Because to sin in the light of the Gospel greatly augments our guilt. (2.) Because to sin now will greatly increase our punishment.

2. The judgment-day. "Because He hath appointed a day," &c.

The last day is a strong argument for all men to repent. (1.) Because then we all must appear before God to be judged. (2.) The judgment will be impartial—"In righteousness." That such day will come is certain from two things—(1.) God hath ordained it. (2.) Christ's resurrection proves it.

May we all "bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."

Bontnewydd.

L. WILLIAMS.

Illustrations, &c.

JESUS GIVES REPENTANCE.—You might pound a lump of ice with a pestle into a thousand fragments, but it would still continue ice. But bring it in beside your own bright and

blazing fire, and soon, in that genial glow, the living waters flow. A man may try to make himself contrite. He may search out his sins, and dwell on all their enormity, and still feel no true repentance. But come to Jesus with His words of grace and truth. Let that flinty, frozen spirit bask in the beams of the Sun of Righteousness—then will it melt.

TRANSIENT REPENTANCE.—See the ice, how hard it is! But twelve o'clock comes, and there is a great heat from the sun, the ice cracks; but the sun goes down, and at night it is as hard as ever. How often is it so under the influence of instruction! A powerful appeal often produces a melting of the heart; the tears, apparently of contrition, flow; but the instruction ended, the tears are dried up, and the heart becomes as hard as ever.

ALL MEN.—Ranks, names, circumstances, offices, education, professions, and nought else of external kind, affects the truth that *all men* are sinners; neither does anyone or the whole of these nullify the necessity of *all* repenting. God is no respecter of persons. He would not command the poor and exempt the rich, &c.

EVERYWHERE.—As ranks, names, &c., among men, in societies, and nationalities, do not affect the nature of sin and the necessity of repentance, neither do rivers, seas, oceans, mountains, colour, languages, &c. God is the God of all the peoples of the earth. He has authority over all, and can command all.

FEAR OF THE JUDGMENT.—Jerome used to say that it seemed to him as if the trumpet of the last day was always sounding in his ear, saying, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment." The generality, however, think but little of this awful and important period. A Christian king of Hungary being very sad and pensive, his brother, who was a gay courtier, was desirous of knowing the cause of his sadness. "Oh, brother," said the king, "I have been a great sinner against God, and know not how to die, or how to appear before God in judgment." His brother, making a jest of it, said, "These are but melancholy thoughts." The king made no reply; but it was the custom of the country that if the executioner came and sounded a trumpet before any man's door, he was presently led to execution. The king, in the dead of night, sent the executioner to sound the trumpet before his brother's door;

who, hearing it, and seeing the messenger of death, sprang into the king's presence, beseeching to know in what he had offended. "Alas! brother," said the king, "you have never offended me. And is the sight of my executioner so dreadful? and shalt not I, who have greatly offended, fear to be brought before the judgment-seat of Christ?"

PUTTING OFF THOUGHTS OF THE JUDGMENT.—Men may allay their fears; they may hush their consciences; they may say to their souls, "Take your ease," and persuade themselves into the belief that the judgment is past; and it may be past so far as their stupified souls are concerned. But their delusion shall be broken. As a thief in the night, the great white throne shall be set, and they must appear.

XXXVIII.—DEVICES OF SATAN.

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."—2 COR. ii. 11.

THE question is: Do we know the devices of Satan? Some, but not all.

I. Some devices of Satan are connected with religious opinions.

II. Others with religious feelings and conduct.

I. *Some devices of Satan are connected with religious opinions.*

1. His favourite device is to admit the truth of God's Word, and then to undervalue it.

"All these doctrines that you find in the Bible," says the father of lies, "are matters of opinion. What's the odds so long as the life is right? Then you should be charitable. There are excellent citizens every whit as good as you, who believe the very opposite of what you believe." "Bigotry is a hateful thing," says the father of bigotry. "Don't be bigoted," says he. "Be tolerant," says the author of all intolerance. "Embrace all views and creeds, for men, after all, are no more responsible for their opinions than for the colour of their hair."

The victims of this stratagem hold the *truth*; but in unrighteousness, under-estimating its practical worth, and neglecting its behests. They have *faith*; but it is not equal to the faith of devils who believe and tremble. They are indifferent, trifling, and unconcerned with Christ as a Foundation, Pattern, and Master. They gaze complacently at Him, when they

should build upon Him; and simply listen without obeying His commands, when they should copy His example.

2. Satan explains away the truth, while he admits the language in which it is recorded.

Language being easily perverted, the cleverness of this device is displayed in finding a wrong meaning without altering the words. The danger here is in making the words of truth the vehicle of error. Bible in hand, the devil, through his agents, may be found in some pulpits glossing over and wringing from the persecuted text a meaning that is directly opposite to that intended to be conveyed by the sacred writer.

3. One of the boldest devices is for the devil to try to persuade men that there is no such thing as a devil. Many persons disbelieve in the existence of spirits, though they profess to believe in the Bible as a revelation of God. "Satan," as mentioned in the Scriptures, they say, "is a mere figure of speech for the personification of evil principles; and devils mean the bad passions and nothing more." What would have been thought of Napoleon Bonaparte, had he endeavoured to persuade the world, whose terror he was, that as a matter of fact he did not exist? What if a mother, to allay the terror in her child, said Bonaparte was only a personification of the abstract principle of ambition? The thing would be too preposterous. The existence of Satan is revealed to us in God's Word.

II. Other devices of Satan are connected *with religious feeling and conduct.*

1. Spiritual pride is used as a device. Religion in its essence is humility. Said a pious man, "The first part is humility, the second humility, the third humility, and the last is humility." Even St. Paul prepared himself against the inroad of this device. He was "not a novice (1. Tim. iii. 6), lest being lifted up with pride he should fall into the condemnation of the devil;" and he says (2 Cor. xii. 7), "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me."

2. But, perhaps, the cleverest piece of craft is when the great deceiver succeeds in making men feel proud of their humility. While the apostle says, "Be clothed with humility," a voice

whispers, "How beautiful you look!" And the moment you become proud of your humility, that moment it is gone.

3. Other stratagems are formalism, by which some men are cheated out of their religion; that doctrine of devils, which says religion is for a few only; there is also the invention for bringing the world into the Church, to make the Church respectable; then there is the device for keeping good men out of the Church, on the plea that everybody in the Church is not what everybody ought to be; the mischievous device that propagates the notion—a most unscriptural one—that religion is something between the individual soul and God, and that other people have nothing to do with the relationship; the devices that create doubts in the minds of timid believers as to the reality of religion; disappointment; despair; devices to keep sinners asleep in their sin; and devices to prevent awakened souls from coming to Christ, who can relieve them of their burdens.

There is an antidote against all these devices, and that is the grace of God as manifested through Jesus Christ. Rely on the promises, the first of which is contained in the threat to the devil that the woman's seed should bruise his head. Look to Him who has spoiled principalities and powers; and by prayer and faith seek grace for the hour of need.

T. M'CULLAGH.

Illustrations, &c.

SATAN'S CUNNING.—The world is Satan's bait. He seldom throws out a naked hook. Let murder, lying, or idolatry, be presented in their undisguised turpitude, and few of good education and correct morals can be taken captive by him. But he conceals the hook in a goodly bait, and like a skilful angler, he knows how to use that part of the world which is best suited to our taste and most likely to decoy. For one he has a golden bait; for another, pleasure; for a third, worldly consequence and honour. And his line is thrown out in every place; in the place of business, in our families, studies, and at our tables, and on our pillows.—*Dr. Jackson.*

GOD KNOWS SATAN.—God can tell thee what plots are hatching against thee. Consider Satan as he is God's creature, so God cannot but know him. He that makes the watch knows every pin in it. Though Satan's way in tempting be as wonderful as the way of a serpent upon a rock, yet God traceth him, yea, knows all his thoughts together.—*Gurnell.*

ENCOURAGING SATAN.—By our instability and weakness; by our parleying and hesitation, we woo Satan to come to us, and give him every reason to expect a triumph over us. We too frequently open the gates of our senses in his presence, and he instantly sends troops of evils through them into our souls. While we are not ignorant of his devices, let us take care that we do not encourage them.

THE ADAPTATION OF SATAN'S DEVICES.—The chameleon, when he lies on the grass to catch flies and grasshoppers, takes upon him the colour of the grass, as the polypus doth the colour of the rock under which he lurketh, that the fish may boldly come near him without any suspicion of danger. In like manner, Satan turneth himself into that shape which we least fear, and sets before us such objects of temptation as are most agreeable to our natures, that so he may the sooner draw us into his net; he sails with every wind, and blows us that way which we incline of ourselves through the weakness of nature. Is our knowledge in matter of faith deficient? He tempts us to error. Is our conscience tender? He tempts us to scrupulosity, and too much preciseness. Are we bold-spirited? He tempts us to presumption. Are we timorous and distrustful? He tempts us to desperation. Are we of a flexible disposition? He tempts us to inconstancy. Are we stiff? He labours to make us obstinate. Are we austere? He tempts to cruelty. Are we soft and mild? He tempts to indulgence and foolish pity. Are we hot in religion? He tempts to blind zeal. Are we cold? He tempts to Laodicean ease. Thus does he lay his traps in our way, that we may be caught in some one or all.—*Spencer.*

Pulpit Illustrations.

CHOOSE CHRIST; CHOOSE HIM NOW.

TH**ERE** are men in this congregation, and there are thousands in the world around, who would give all that they are worth for that power of choosing a course for their life-time which you boys and girls have—who would give all that they are worth to tear up the scroll of past years that is written with the record of their godlessness and transgression—who would give all that they are worth for one return of the early childish days when the heart was plastic and soft to receive impressions—when the conscience was sensitive to respond to

the voice of God, and when long persistence in the attitude of rejection had not so stiffened the will as to make the opening of the long-clenched hand all but impossible. Now, whilst your natures have not been corrupted by much knowledge of evil—now, whilst the world all about you is beautiful with the mysterious light of early days—now, whilst heart, and will, and habit, are all fit to be moulded, and moulded aright—now, whilst you have not given pledges to the world by years of unbelief—now, whilst you have not a burden of transgressions, stretching through years, to repent of—now, whilst you have life before you, that may be made sacred and beautiful, wise and righteous, full of Christ, and a temple to God—brother and friend, little child and young man, I beseech you, listen, not to my voice, but to that Incarnate Wisdom that says, “Whosoever is simple, let him turn in hither.” “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”—*A. Maclaren.*

HOPE.

HOPE is always a source of pleasure. Its delights are, indeed, imaginary; but they are not the less varied, or the less sweet. Imagination is sure to paint its objects exactly to the taste we have formed; and hence it happens often that, after having been enamoured strongly of an object, and after having enjoyed, by anticipation, very great pleasure during the pursuit, we find ourselves on coming into possession entirely disappointed. In the present fluctuating state of being, hope is the sun of life's system. It lights up the glories of our infant morning, gilds the flowers of our spring, brings forward our summer fruit, ripens our autumnal harvest, softens the icy rigours of wintry age, and sheds on our closing evening a softened, mellowed, tranquil glow, through which the mind perceives the “more enduring substance” of an eternal country.

WILL NOT LIGHT.

WALKING home one night through the street, I saw the lamp-lighter trying again and again to light up the lamp, but he could not. I said to him, “It will not light, my man.” “No, zir,” he replied; “she's got some water in the pipe. That's the reason, zir.” It instantly occurred to my mind how very much that lamp resembles some people in our congregations. The Holy Spirit and the ministers, in different ways and at different times, try to light up their hearts by the truth, that they may “shine as lights” in this dark world, but they will not light. They have worldliness, unbelief, pride, or some other evil within which prevent them taking light; and so they remain in darkness, and they and the world suffer the loss.—*B.*

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